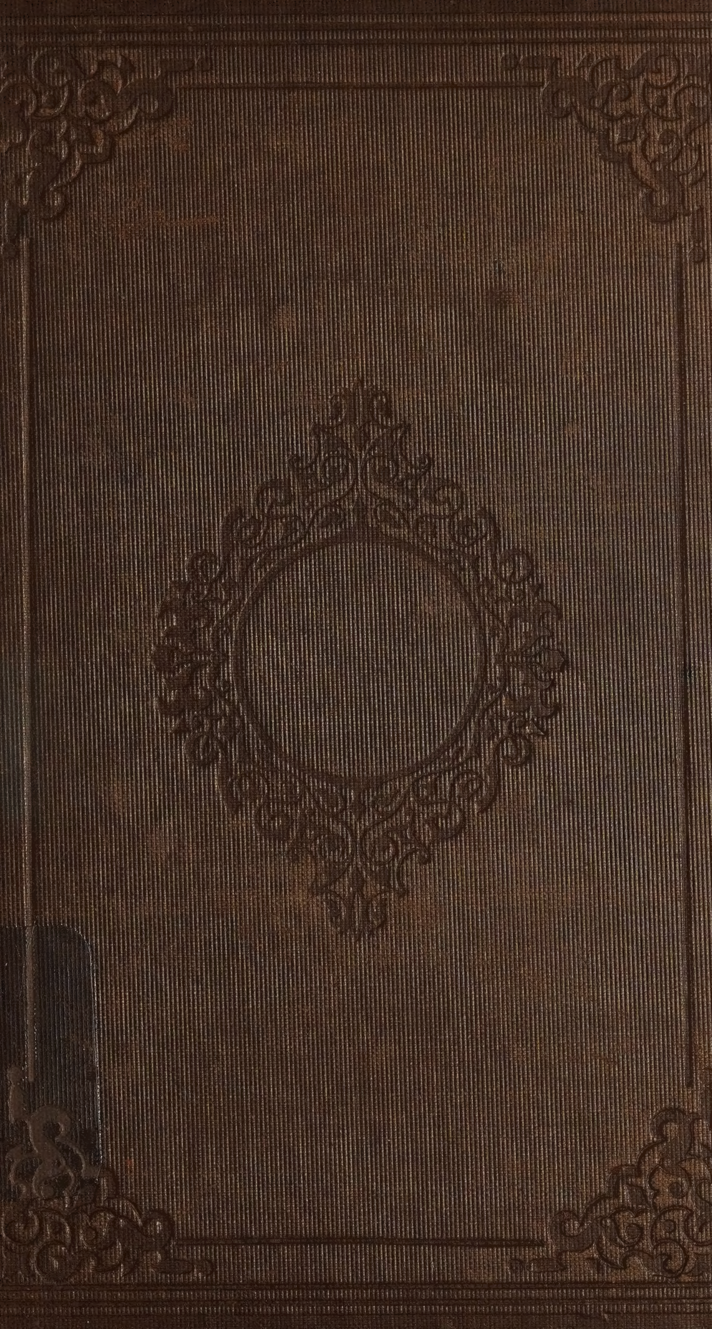

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CHRIST OUR LIFE:

IN

ITS ORIGIN, LAW, AND END.

BY

JOSEPH ANGUS, D.D.

MEMBER OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY.

“Christ . . . our life.” “To me to live is Christ.”—Col. iii. 4: Phil. i. 21.

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In republishing the following work the American Baptist Publication Society has been influenced by several independent considerations. Its peculiar design, so far from giving it a limited local bearing, has given it a peculiarly broad and catholic character, adapted to intelligent minds in every region of the earth, in every condition of culture or of creed. It also imparts a comprehensiveness to its plans, and a freshness of view in its execution. Its general merit is sufficiently attested by the unanimous decision of the Committee—all of them members of the Church of England—after an examination of sixty-four manuscripts. Its Author, Dr. Angus, late Secretary of the Baptist Missionary Society, is now President of Stepney College, London.

In the Editorial revision of the work for the American public, very few changes have been required or admitted. The style is distinguished by its clearness and classic beauty. Wherever any difference of judgment of sufficient moment occurred, the Editor has preferred to express it in the Notes. The Editor's Notes are distinguished from those of the Author by the initials—J. N. B.

For general reading, for the aid of the young theological student, for Bible Classes, and for Sabbath School Teachers in particular, this volume will be found a peculiar treasure. Christ, in His various interesting relations, is the centre, the soul, and the glory of the book. It is a book for the whole world—and especially so in these times of expanding knowledge, of commercial and missionary movement, and of almost universal transition to a new and better order of things.

TO THE UNKNOWN FRIEND

(WITH WHOSE GENEROUS LIBERALITY THIS ESSAY ORIGINATED)

AND

TO ALL OF EVERY NAME

WHO HAVE RECEIVED FROM CHRIST A MISSION 'FOR THE OBEDIENCE OF

FAITH AMONG ALL NATIONS'

THESE PAGES ARE RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED.

PREFACE.

THE following pages originated in the public application of a gentleman in the civil service of the East India Company for an "ESSAY ON THE LIFE OF CHRIST, adapted to missionary purposes, and suitable for translation into the vernacular languages of India."

The subjects recommended for special discussion and illustration were:—The Original Deity of the Son of God: The circumstances of His life and death, so as to show the wonders of His love in the work of redemption, and the sinfulness of sin: The glorious exaltation of Christ, and His second coming: the whole being intended to exhibit most forcibly to the minds of intelligent heathen the wonderful character of the Son of God.

A nobler theme never occupied the pen or heart of man!

When the writer's attention was called to this announcement, the condition of the heathen and of India had long occupied his thoughts; and he was at the time engaged in reading the life of our Lord with a class of students entrusted to his care. His own mind had been profoundly impressed with the richness and depth of the Gospel narrative, and he was induced to set forth his conceptions of it in the following form. The Essay was sent in to the adjudicators—the Rev. Professor Scholefield, of the University of Cambridge; the Rev. John Tucker, Secretary of the Church Missionary Society; and the Rev. Thomas Sale, now Vicar of Sheffield—and of the sixty-four submitted to them, it was declared by their unanimous decision to be the best adapted for the purpose contemplated by the advertiser.

In the narrative of the Gospels, the writer has adopted the arrangement of Dr. Robinson of New York, deeming it on the whole the most satisfactory that has been published. In the sections on "Christ incarnate a Saviour through suffering," and on "Christ crucified afresh," he has availed himself of sermons by Dr. Wayland, of Brown University, Rhode Island; and the late Rev. Professor Butler, of Dublin. In both sections he has given little more than their thoughts in his own words, and in such order as seemed best suited to the special design of the volume.

If these pages succeed in calling attention to the devout study of our Lord's life, the writer can from experience promise to such readers an ample recompense; and he will himself feel that, so far as this country is concerned, his end is gained.

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CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

§ 1. Different Families, but one Blood.
§ 2. Progress in Error.
§ 3. Results Moral and Practical.
§ 4. Palestine, the Scene of the Labors of the Messiah.
§ 5. The Gospels, the Record of his Life.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

SECT. I.—DIFFERENT FAMILIES, BUT ONE BLOOD.

Gatherings at Shinaar.

1. A thousand years before the Vedas were written, (B. C. 1400,) and at least 1800 before the laws of Menu, which form the basis of Hindoo jurisprudence, were composed, (B. C. 600,) the descendants of the second father of the human family (who had been miraculously saved from a fearful flood, began to multiply on the earth. As they multiplied, they removed from the mountain districts of Armenia to the well-watered plains of Shinaar, between the rivers Hiddekel (Tigris) and Euphrates, "the swift-flowing" and "the fruitful." Here, in very early times, men were formed into families, and established in towns and villages. Here also they followed agriculture, built cities, and practised many of the arts of civilized life.

One Faith.

2. As they grew in numbers they grew in wickedness; till at length, partly as a punishment of their sins, and partly as a consequence of failing pasture and deficient produce, they became scattered; each band retaining the civilization and the fragments of religious truth which the better men among them had preserved. From a book of demonstrable antiquity, containing records that can be traced to within a comparatively short period of the time when these events took place, we

gather that, even then and for ages later, there was a general belief in the unity of God, in the creation and preservation of all things by Divine power, in a general and particular Providence, in a Divine law fixing distinctions between right and wrong, in the fall and corruption of man, in the doctrine of atonement through vicarious suffering, in direct Divine spiritual influence, in human responsibility, and in the necessity for practical holiness. True religion, in fact, has ever been faith and obedience; an humble, submissive repose of the heart on Divine truth, and appropriate holiness. Whether it be regarded as a system of truth—objective religion, or as a system of holy affection—subjective religion, it has never changed.

Its origin explained.

3. Nor is it difficult to account for either the completeness or the diffusion of this knowledge. The flood of waters occurred in the life-time of the third generation from Adam, our first parent. He had been created by God in his own image; but yielding to temptation he fell, and involved us all in his ruin. For many years Lamech was his contemporary; Lamech again was the father of Noah, and the contemporary for many years of Shem, as Shem was of Abraham, the father of the people "of whom, according to the flesh, Christ came."

Methuselah, again, was for more than two hundred years a contemporary of Adam, and for six hundred years of Noah; and through him, or other similar channels, might the knowledge of the true God have been transmitted and preserved.* During the whole of this interval, too, many eminently holy men appeared—Abel, Seth, Enoch, and Noah, all of them preachers of righteousness, and valiant for the truth upon the earth.

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* This is the Hebrew chronology. The chronology of the LXX. makes the insertion of another generation necessary both before and after the Deluge. But this difference is of little moment. The transmission of Divine knowledge is nearly equally easy in either case.

Speedy deterioration.

4. In spite of these influences, however, human nature soon showed its true character, and its lamentable tendency to deterioration. Before the flood, God had seen that the wickedness of men was great, that every imagination of the thoughts of their heart was only evil continually, and the flood left them unchanged.

As early as the days of Shem, the son of Noah, idolatry was openly practised in Chaldea, the country of Abraham; and not more than a hundred years after the death of Noah, the whole district of Sodom and Gomorrah was destroyed in consequence of the guilt of its inhabitants. Fire from heaven, combined with the bitumen and sulphur of that region, consumed them. The plain is now filled with the Dead Sea, whose waters exhibit in their saltness, and slimy bituminous qualities, evidences of the fearful catastrophe with which it was visited.

Migration of early settlers.

5. As the first settlers in Shinaar were dispersed, they went in different directions, and according to the families to which they belonged. The sons of JAPHET, the eldest-born, travelled northward, Madai and his descendants settling on the borders of the Caspian, and Gomer and his descendants on the borders of the Black Sea. Here their numbers increased; till, at length, many of the descendants of Madai moved down into Hindustan, while many of the descendants of Gomer moved westward, (with other branches of the same great family) into Europe. The primæval inhabitants, therefore, of India, those who first spoke the Sanscrit tongue, and nearly all who afterwards migrated among them from the north, were, ethnographically, Caucasians,* and belonged to the same division of the human family which have since made the inhabitants of the western world, and of Britain especially, the moving spirits of the earth. India and Europe are

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* So called from the range of mountains near which they had originally settled.

allied, therefore, not only through a common interest, but through the close connection of the races that first peopled them.

From SHEM, whose descendants remained at Shinaar, and ultimately occupied Arabia and Syria, were descended the Chaldeans, the Persians,* the Assyrians, the Jews and the Mohammedan nations, who have since modified the character of the population of the east, either by migration or conquest. Through this branch of the great family of man, India has closer ethnographical connection with the natives of Palestine than Europeans; and it is clear that, if Europe has received the Messiah of the Jews, it is not because He is of her race, but because she is convinced of the divinity of His claims.

Connection of Europe and India.

The descendants of HAM settled in Egypt and in other parts of Africa, and have had frequent intercourse, by sea, with India. From that country, indeed, it is generally thought, they imported their arts and learning.

Evidence of this connection in Mythology and

6. If we seek for further evidence of this connection between Europe and "utmost Ind," it is found in the affinities which subsist between the languages and the mythologies of the two regions. The polluted streams of Greek, Slavonic, and Hindoo mythology have, evidently, a common source; their myths a common basis, and their rites and ceremonies a common authority. Many of the gods which crowd the Pantheon of the East were known, under appropriate names, to Homer and Hesiod, and to our Saxon forefathers. The Indra and Yama of the East are the Pluvius and Pluto of Rome. The god of the waters (Peruna), and the goddess of love, (Rembha), are the Neptune and

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* The Shemitish Persians, however, were early overcome by tribes descended from Japhet. Modern Persians, therefore, belong chiefly to the Caucasian race, some to the family of Ham.

Venus of the West. The very names of the days of the week are called, in India, by names taken from the same deities as preside in Western calculations over those portions of time. This general conclusion is not affected by the fact, that the religion of each of these nations was influenced by peculiarities of position and of climate. The German and the Briton kindled their devotion beside their blood-stained altars, in the depth of the forest; the Roman blended his religion with luxury or war; the Greek with poetry, philosophy, or art. But these differences refer rather to the forms of devotion most popular among these various tribes, than to the objects of their worship. The people had really the same gods, though the services offered to them changed with the national character and circumstances of the worshippers. To complete this evidence, it must be added, that nearly all the branches of the Shemitish nations were monotheistic, and, instead of supplying Europe and Asia with idols, borrowed them when guilty of idolatry, from the descendants of Japhet or of Ham.

in Language.

7. Further, it is notorious that the Sanscrit language, with its numerous derivatives, is closely connected, both in matter and in form, with the Greek, Latin, German, and Sclavonic tongues. There are in Sanscrit no less than nine hundred words having the same root as corresponding words in the languages of the West, while affinities of form supply evidence of a common origin no less striking and decisive; indeed it is indisputable, that the ancestors of those who now speak the Sanscrit and the Gothic, (including, under the former, most of the derivative dialects of the East, and, under the latter, the Sclavonic, the German, high and low, and the classic languages of ancient Europe,) had once a common tongue, and interchanged their thoughts by similar ele-

ments of speech. So true is the Scripture declaration, that men were divided "according to their families," though made of one blood, and possessing, first in Adam, and then in Noah, a common progenitor. This truth,—the identity of India and Europe,—is completed when we add to it the fact, that both have fallen through a common calamity, and are, in Christ, invited to an interest in what is emphatically a "common salvation."

SECT. 2.—PROGRESS IN ERROR.

Error is apparently infinite, but

8. It may seem a long and a useless task to enumerate and classify the religious errors that prevailed in the Western world when the Saviour appeared. Truth is unchanging, but error is, from its nature, mutable and endless.

really limited. Study of it useful,

9. But though the forms of error are, in themselves, infinite, error is *practically* limited. To be believed at all, it must be blended with truth, or it must be adapted to the human heart Under either necessity the number of its forms is lessened, and they all become objects of interest, for the study of them throws light either upon truth, or upon human nature, or upon both.

in various ways.

10. In another respect, too, the history of error is important. If we ascertain its character and working in one religious system, we shall have a key to systems less accurately known. Popular errors repeat themselves; and, if we analyze them once, we are prepared to trace and investigate them elsewhere. Pharisaism, for example, is found the world over. Sadduceeism is rationalistic infidelity, whether in India or in Europe. The cosmogonies of the Ionic school of philosophy, in Greece, have been revived in China; and we find, in our own Western continent, both the polytheism and the

pantheistic tendencies of the systems of Brahma and Buddh.

Monotheism and spiritual worship once universal. Shown in philosophical traditions and

11. "There is one God; he is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth," are lessons of Holy Scripture, *once known to all mankind.* Tradition still preserved among the primitive tribes of America, speaks of the Great Spirit." Greece had its "Father of Gods," who was himself before them all, Κρόνος. Even Parseeism had "illimitable time," whose essence enshrouds both Ormuzd and Ahriman; as Hindooism has its "absolute intelligence," its "essential light," "rest," and "contemplation;" forms of expression which connect the pantheism of India with the antagonistic Buddhism of Ceylon and China.

in the popular feeling.

12. And while philosophy has disclosed the existence among the intelligent of a belief of this truth, its existence is attested by the language of common life. "In the deepest emotions of their minds, the heathen," says Tertullian, "never direct their exclamations to their false gods, but employ the words—'God help me,'—'as God liveth;' and then moreover, they look not to the capitol but to the heavens." Aulus Gellius informs us, (Noctes Atticæ, ii. 28.) in the same strain, that the ancient Romans were not accustomed during earthquakes to pray to some gods individually, but only to God in general, as to the Great Unknown. Even in India, the Hindoo speaks of God as possessed of a unity of which he certainly finds no counterpart in his present system. He regards Him as Creator, Preserver, and Ruler. He calls Him as a witness of his integrity; and, when not thinking of the creed which he is bound to defend, employs forms of speech and inadvertent references, which show that the teaching of his conscience is better than the teaching of his faith.

True religion older than false.

13. This view takes for granted, of course, that false religions are more modern than the true; and this representation all history sustains. "Most nations," says J. von Müller, "though entirely uncultivated in other things, had perfectly correct views of God, of the world, of immortality; while the arts, which pertain to the conveniences of life, are much younger. It seems, in fact, as if the breath of the Divinity within us, our spirit, had acquired through the immediate teaching of a higher Being, and for a long time had retained, certain indispensable ideas and habits, while what pertains to the employment of material capacities was left for the exercise of our own mental powers." Herder and F. Schlegel, and a host of others, concur in this view; while in ancient times, Plato and Aristotle agree in affirming that the early state of man was neither savage nor corrupt, but a simple and holy state, approaching nearer to the Divine—a state from which the savage and the corrupt man are equally removed.

Origin of false systems.

14. How this belief in the being of one Supreme Deity ended in the belief of many gods, is explained in the Epistle to the Romans. "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unholiness of men, who through unholiness suppress the truth. For so much as can be known of God is manifested to them; for what in him is peculiarly invisible—his eternal power and divinity—appears visible in his works since the creation of the world as soon as we contemplate them; so that the heathen are without excuse; they knew God indeed, but they honored him not as God, nor were they thankful to him as such; but they became trifling and vain in their speculations, and their apprehension was darkened—pretending to be wise they became fools, and put in the place* of the glory of the incorruptible God, an image of

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* ’ὴλλαξαν, ἐν not εἰς.

the form of corruptible man, and of birds, of four-footed beasts, and of creeping things. Therefore God also gave them up through the lusts of their sense to impurity, so that they have dishonored their own bodies; they have changed the truth of God into a lie, and have reverenced and worshipped the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed for ever, amen. Wherefore God gave them up to debasing passions. And as they did not regard it as worth their pains to keep God in their knowledge, God gave them up to a reprobate mind, to do things abominable, being full of all unholiness, whoredom, malice, avarice, baseness, full of envy, of murder, of strife, deceit, and malignity, calumniators, slanderers, despisers of God, haughty, proud, boastful, mischief-makers, disobedient to parents, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful; who, though they well know the law of God, that they who do such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but also bestow praise on those who do them." Moral corruption, therefore, first led to idolatry.

Polytheism.

15. As long as man remained in a living moral relation to God, the diversity which seems to pervade all nature created little attention and no misgiving. Accustomed to exercise faith, men saw through the diversity into the unity that lay beneath it; or they had at least no guilty fear. But when this condition was lost, and the holiness of the Divine character grew distasteful, the visible alone came gradually to be regarded; the heavens, the earth, the winds, the sea. Men found it difficult perhaps to look away from what lay before their eyes; and disliking conclusions which brought them into immediate relation to a God almighty, omnipresent, and perfectly holy, they ended in finding a god in each individual appearance, or in every hope or fear which distracted their hearts. Thus Polytheism arose.

Pantheism.

16. More sagacious minds started back from the results of this system; and thinking that they perceived unity amidst all the diversity of nature, but still renouncing the knowledge of one holy, self-existent God above the world, they regarded as God that collective vitality which appeared in the whole. Hence arose Pantheism—a system which reunited the animating principles of the previous theory, and taught, on the one hand, that all its separate deities were parts of the soul of the world, or emanations of the great Fountain of mind; and held on the other, that mind and matter were distinctions purely metaphysical and imaginary; that every thing was God, and God every thing, the whole universe being one and indivisible. Possibly some sages ascended higher still, and recognised in this poetical pantheism the foundation of a moral monotheism, which, however, was too sublime and simple for even their own faith.

Progress and mutual influence of these systems.

17. Whether this order of error be the universal one, may be disputed. Among some nations, the *pantheistic* tendency seems to have developed itself first, and transmigration was one of its results—a doctrine that resolves all souls into one—the soul of the world, which first divides its essence, and then reabsorbs the parts. Among other nations, *polytheism* first appeared under the form of the worship of the visible heavens, and of the Spirit who was supposed to animate them; then of the heavenly bodies; then of the representatives of the various energies of nature, as distinct deities; then, perhaps, of deceased heroes. From this polytheism again sprung pantheism. The idea of separate deities was too gross to please the philosopher. As the common people had marked the various phenomena of the universe, and ascribed each to a separate god, he took those gods, and traced them all in the same way to a common infinite intelligence. "God," says Zeno, "is the Author and Father

of all; and he is called by various names, according to the power manifested. He is *Dis*, because all things are THROUGH him; *Zeus*,* because all LIVE by him; *Athene*, because his directing power is DIFFUSED in air.† These etymologies may be questioned, but the remark illustrates a principle of admitted truth.

In most countries, probably, the two systems prevailed contemporaneously, as in Greece. The Vedas, too, favor the application of this conclusion to India; for they seem to suggest doubts whether man and all things were not parts of the Divinity, though they abound in polytheistic instructions. Buddhism, professedly pantheistic, and at first anti-polytheistic, is notoriously polytheistic; for while it admits one Buddha, it reverences and worships even animals, as possibly containing proper forms of that Intelligence which is all-pervading and supreme.

Illustrated in Greece.

18. The tendencies of these systems may be easily illustrated from the history of Grecian sects. In the time of our Lord the whole western world was divided into three great classes: the followers of Epicurus, of Zeno, and of Plato. The first admitted the existence of a Divine Being as a philosophical truth, on condition only that He should have no connection with the world; and held, at the same time, that there were inferior deities, as represented in the mythologies of the day; the belief in those gods being, in the opinion, of the founder of this sect, a proof of their existence; for all belief he maintained to be an effluence of real objects.‡

Epicureanism.

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* The Greek derivation is here adopted; but both Ζεὺς and Δὶς are forms of an old Sanscrit word, applied also to the supreme God.

† In Diog. Laertius, vii. 147.

‡ Nothing can represent more accurately than the language ascribed by Cicero to Velleius, the views of the Epicureans:—Imposuistis in cervicibus nostris sempiternum dominum, quem dies et noctes timeremus.

The Stoics.

The Platonists.

The followers of Zeno, or the Stoics, were strictly pantheists; holding that the world itself is divine, and that the Deity dwells in it. Nor do the Academics, the followers of Plato, greatly differ from the Stoics in these respects: for all held that God is deified living nature; that this deity is the source of the human soul, and the principle into which it will ultimately return and be absorbed. Man, therefore, in both systems, was taken as the sample of the Godhead, whom he was to judge of and measure by himself. In both systems common men, with minds dissipated amid the multitude of visible things, have intercourse only with those mediatorial deities who approach nearest to themselves: while the spiritual man, living in contemplation, soars upwards, in thought at least, to the supreme original Essence.*

All Pantheistic, Atheistic, or

19. Concerning these sects, it is obvious to remark, that the first is atheistic in its spirit. *Epicureanism* believed in the existence of a supreme God, but it robbed him of all his attributes. He neither sees, nor does he desire or act. He is without superintendence or control; without power or life. The inferior deities are, like himself, eternal and imperishable, living in a state of complete repose. The very God of

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Quis enim non timeat *omnia providentem, et cogitantem, et animadvertentem, et omnia ad se pertinere putantem,* curiosum et plenum negoti Deum? *De Nat. Deor.* i. 20.

* Plato's ὢν is distinguished from the Θεοὶ γενητοὶ of his system. Attempts, such as Plato's, to bring back the faith of man from the visible deities to the Great Invisible, have been made in all ages; though, perhaps, never (apart from Revelation) with greater originality and purity than are manifested in Plato's writings. There is at present a society in India, formed for the same purpose, a kind of Hindoo Unitarians. The futility of all such attempts—apart from Revelation—is proved from the history of all ancient philosophy.

Epicurus, therefore, is a mere negation: and his nature is denied in the very terms that admit his being.

This atheistic spirit was confirmed by other parts of his system. He taught that the world is not the work of an intelligent Cause, but a fatherless child, a causeless effect, disowned by all superior natures, the result of a fortuitous concourse of atoms. The soul, he maintained, is corporeal, and perishes with the dissolution of the atoms of which it is composed. Pleasure is our sovereign good; and man's chief end is exemption from suffering, and the gratification of natural desires. In this system, therefore, we are our own law, without higher governor or judge. Death is nothing, and there is nothing beyond it.

Stoicism, in some of its sects, held that matter and spirit are identical; mind being the bright fountain of all things, but becoming gross and dim as it flowed at a distance from its source. What is called creation is but the expansion of the Deity. The contraction again of the same object to its original dimensions, will be the annihilation of the world. Hence all that is, is God; and there is no existence but God. As the tree of the forest is but the growth of the original germ, and the leaves, fruit, and stem are, though diverse in form, but one tree; so is the universe an expansion of God. As the diamond and the coal are both carbon; as air and water are but the same elements in different proportions; so all nature is but the varied God. It is he who

> Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,
> Glows in the stars, and blossoms, in the trees,
> Lives through all life, extends through all extent,
> Spreads undivided, operates unspent.

Such is speculative Stoicism.

Platonism again applied this doctrine of emanation to spirit, rather than to matter; but, with this exception, used language not different from that of the Stoic. And concerning both systems, it may be affirmed that they tend, both logically and in popular feeling, either to practical atheism, or to polytheism. Stoicism taught that every thing which is, is God, and will be absorbed into the Divine essence; Platonism confines this dogma to the souls of men. In both a *real* Deity is denied. The true God is as we know, indivisible. Both systems divided him into infinitesimal portions. He is incapable of change, of impurity, of suffering. Both systems make him subject to them all. A God whose attributes are identical with men, or with nature, is clearly robbed of all that is characteristic and divine. The one system taught that God is matter and Creator; the other, that he is spirit and Creator. Both make him to be the material out of which either all things, or all rational agents, at least are made. He is at once potter and clay, master and servant, father and child, governor and subject, judge and criminal.

In such systems, where all souls are not only God's but God, he himself, and all the relations that refer to him, are virtually disowned, and all moral government is overthrown. The very distinction between good and evil is rendered impossible; holiness and sin are attributes of the same Spirit, and the only real Spirit is the Godhead. Evil is but a development of his character. When men speak, it is the Divine Spirit speaking through them; when they act, it is the Divine Spirit acting in them; and in a fearfully unholy sense, it is "one God who worketh all in all."

Polytheistic and

20. Nor is it difficult to see how these systems tended to encourage Polytheism. The idea of a universal God, identical in the one system with the universe, and in the other with the spirits of men, was too vague for the popular mind; but it led naturally to the deification of the several parts of the material universe. Everything is part of the Deity; everything, therefore, may be adored. But as some selection must be made, those

objects which transcend the rest, either in the force with which they strike the fancy, or in their utility, come to be considered specially divine. Does the sun warm and fructify the earth? It is divine. Does the moon light up the darkness of the night? It is divine. Does the mighty river flow throughout the land; now marking its course with lines of verdure and tracts of fruitfulness, and now sweeping away the towns and villages that had flourished on its bounty? It is divine. By a very easy generalisation, the principles of preservation and of destruction themselves are deified; and thus systems the most abstract and apparently spiritual, foster a Polytheism the most cumbrous and degrading.

favorable to Hero-worship and Asceticism.

21. Hero-worship and mystical asceticism spring from the same source; or if already existing, are nourished by it. The benefactors of the human race, men eminent for their wisdom or power, appear as literally partakers of a Divine nature. Their voice is the voice of God. When they die, whatever was mortal of them passes away; what remains is Divine, in origin, in power, and why not also in destiny and honors.

If man, again, would elevate and perfect his own nature, let him destroy his conscious individuality, let him leave the world, gratify no sense, and receive from the external universe no impressions. Let him turn his thoughts within; the kingdom of God is there. By contemplation the inquirer may become the sage, and the neophyte be prepared for intercourse with the Great Spirit from whom he sprang, and of whom he is part.

All found in the East. Christianity adapted to them all.

22. Such was Grecian philosophy, and such to the very letter are the systems which now prevail in the distant East. Christianity appeared when these philosophical systems were in their glory in the western world, and they fell before it. What was true in them it had already embodied. What

was false it swept away. It can encounter no new forms of error, and our conviction of its final triumph is confirmed, not only by a persuasion of the power of its Author, but by the history of the past.

Of course the systems of the Eastern and Western worlds, while in spirit they are identical, have their characteristic differences. In every clime man is always man. He is exposed nevertheless, in different regions, to different influences. According to these influences, every thing which belongs to him, worship, custom, literature, each receives its peculiar impress. In Greece religion was devotion to external nature, and at last to art; in Rome it was devotion to country, and then to power. The Greek worshiped taste, the Roman energy. The Oriental, on the other hand, of fervid imagination and of contemplative tendencies, learns little of nature or of the world, retires into the recesses of his own consciousness, and weaves into his mythology traditions and fancies innumerable! Hence have sprung systems, of which it is difficult to say whether we wonder most at their luxuriancy or powerlessness. Everything seems there, but truth and life. Throughout all these characteristic differences, however, there is essential sameness; and the tendencies which we trace in the mythologies of the West, are found at work in the godless temples of China, and in the pantheons of Hindustan.

Very touching it is to notice in these systems, moreover, a singular blending of the sublime and the degrading; of the spiritual and the earthly. Men seem to have found it impossible to realize clearly the idea of God, or their relation to him. The Epicurean and the Buddhist think they do him most honor in deeming him a mere abstraction. The Stoic connects him with every change and form of life to be traced in the universe. Some call him the Good Spirit; others rather fear than trust him; while in the creed of most he is clothed with attributes which are, in fact, the reflection of their own. It was reserved for the Christian system to meet the wants which these various theories represent—a God vast, invisible, spiritual, eternal, and yet revealing himself in our own nature, and in such a form as commends his character at once to our reverence and love.

Sect. 3.—Moral and Practical Result.

Men's views of God an evidence and a means of their corruption.

23. The statements and reasonings of the previous section might be regarded as rather curious than important, but for two facts. The first, that men's conceptions of God, are a decisive evidence of their own character; and the second, that the characters of men are further influenced by those conceptions. Both facts are affirmed in the quotations given from St. Paul. Where once the knowledge of the true God is forgotten, men feign the existence of deities like themselves; and where such deities are worshiped, their influence degrades and pollutes the worshipers. Let us know what men worship, and we can tell what they are. Let us know what they worship, and we can tell what they will become. The idolatries of nations are at once an evidence and an aggravation of their depravity.

How depravity may be proved.

24. What that depravity is, and what it involves, is a solemn question, which we now proceed to examine in the light of Scripture. "In the light of Scripture," because though the question is answered in other quarters, it is only in Scripture that it is *fully* answered; for it is one effect of our depravity, that it has enfeebled our very power of perception. Right and wrong are less distinctly seen, and much less distinctly felt, than they would have been if we had never sinned. Let the reader look again at Paul's description of human nature, and examine it. He will find that every statement

it contains, even the darkest, is supported (as may be seen in such writings as those of Wetstein or of Leland,)* by quotations without number from ancient poets, satirists, and philosophers. It is supported by every system of human law, and by the whole history of our race. It is not, however, to these authorities we now mean to appeal. Having the Bible in our hands, we desire to decide this question by its teaching; and it will be found that its requirements, contrasted with the admitted condition of human nature, give at once the true rule of holiness and the true measure of our guilt.

Man's twofold relation and consequent duties.

25. Virtue or holiness, most comprehensively defined, is the acting of moral agents in accordance with the relations they sustain. The relations sustained by man are relations towards God and towards men,† and virtue in him is right feeling and consistent practice towards both. This division is sanctioned by the ablest writers on moral science, and is repeatedly recognised in Scripture, of which we need no better example than the first chapter of the Romans; where the depth of our degradation is shown from the fact that the obligations consequent on this twofold relation are left unfulfilled. What *is due* to each we may learn from the Bible. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself." Our moral nature corroborates the justness of this rule. Men admit that if they do not love God with all their hearts, and their neighbors as themselves, then is their moral character imperfect, and they become exposed to the desert of wrong doing. If, on the contrary, neither

Love to God.
Love to Man.

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* See Wetstein on Rom. iii., and Leland on the *Advantage and Necessity of the Christian Revelation.* See also Dr. Tholuck on the *Moral Influence of Heathenism.*

† See Wayland's *Moral Science and Sermons,* for an admirable summary of the duties involved in these relations.

part of this precept is violated, then may they claim the just rewards of obedience.

Men have not fulfilled their duties.

Let us take these rules in the order in which we have indicated them, and ask how far men love their neighbors as themselves. We desire happiness and we seek it. The desire and the search are both commendable. We claim the right of using all proper means for attaining our end; and if any power interfere between us and the end, we are aggrieved and complain. What we thus claim for ourselves, is due to our neighbor; and he has the right to expect, at our hands, the same feeling, and, as far as possible, the same effort for his welfare that we cherish and put forth for our own. Such is the law of Scripture, and the universal consciousness of men must admit that this law is just.

Love to man.

How broken, in relation to man, and in relation to God.

26. *How far* men have declined from this law Scripture has not told us; for in this respect men have sinned in very dissimilar degrees. It intimates, however, most plainly, that the most eminent in virtue are still imperfect; that with all, the tendency is not to virtue but to vice. Selfishness and not benevolence—undue preference, in fact, for themselves is the law, and the contrary the exception.

Nor does the testimony of Scripture on this point differ from the lessons of individual experience. Our fellow-men are everywhere around us. We see particularly their dispositions, and we can ascertain our own. Upon what principle are the most approved maxims of business framed, and what truth do they embody! What, moreover, is civil government, but a system of limitations and punishments, invented for defending the community against the selfishness of its members? In ourselves, too, what is the *natural* bias—strong self-love or disinterested feeling? Are acts of justice, when they involve some sacrifice of our own advantage, done without effort? Is pure, impartial justice between man and man the rule of human life? But we need not multiply questions. It is notorious that man's love to his neighbor yields continually to the demands of self-interest or of passion; and the result is, that in spite of law and conscience, the earth has been filled with violence. Everywhere mankind plead guilty to the charge of disobeying the great social command, though that command is sanctioned by reason and Scripture.

We are not ascribing to this corruption the same form or degree, though asserting that all men are guilty. The holiest come short of the requirement, and this is all we affirm. All short-coming, moreover, flows from the same fountain. Selfishness and passion, murder and jealousy, theft and envy, tyranny and petty vanity, are but modifications of what all feel to be corrupt. The forms vary, but the principle is the same, and that principle is universal.

Looking, therefore, simply at the extent of the Divine command, and contrasting with it the endlessly diversified forms of human character, we affirm that men do not anywhere love their neighbors as themselves. Everywhere, and by every one, the law is broken; and so far the whole world is declared guilty before God.

Love to God.

Infinitely more important than our relation to one another, is our relation to God. He is our Creator and Preserver. The law, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart," is in the highest degree just. No one can question it, or offer any other law as a substitute for it, without involving himself in absurdity. Once maintain that a being of infinite benevolence is not deserving of gratitude, or that a being of just and boundless authority can claim no submission, eternal holiness no reverence, immutable faithfulness no trust—and the very foundation of excellence

Importance of this duty.

is overturned, and virtue becomes impossible. The love of God is the element of all goodness. Other relations are mutable and transient, as are the obligations that spring from them. This relation is immutable and eternal; so are its obligations. The relation itself comprehends every other. Gravitation in the material world is, in truth, but a faint emblem of the importance of this principle in the moral. Let either be withdrawn, and all things—both heaven and earth—must speedily fall back into disorder and ruin.

How broken.

Now, the distinct assertion of Scripture is, that men are in a godless condition; that is, that their estimate of duty is not fixed by a regard for God's authority—that their obedience, even to natural laws, is not prompted by reverence for him—that he is not loved, as from his character, he deserves to be. It asserts further, that he is, in himself and in his perfections, viewed with hatred and dismay. Over and above the charge of immorality, therefore, Scripture brings against all men the charge either of ungodliness, or of positive aversion to God, or, most generally, of both. And the whole of these charges may be sustained.

Men live without God.

In men of acknowledged excellence, fair in character, and upright in conduct, this ungodliness prevails. They have no sense of God. They act as they would act were they certain that there was neither Divine law, governor, nor judge. The law of God is never the reason why they do, or forbear, a single act of their lives. Their virtue is purely earthly and secular—gathers its motives from a sense of social obligation, or from a concern for personal character; so that while in itself lamentably defective, even for present duty, it can clearly have no place in the world where God is all and in all.

And though this may seem to be an extreme case, yet let any man look at his own heart, and ask himself these questions in relation to the acts of a single day—'Was it God's will that guided my steps? Do its transactions belong to a self-regulating being, or to a being ever looking upwards to his Creator, and subordinating himself in all things to the rightful authority of the God that made him? If not in every act, yet certainly in a large proportion of the acts of every day, did I not prefer to be "without God," to walk after my own heart, and in the sight of my own eyes—and, because God is not in *all* my thoughts, am I not justly condemned?'

Sinfulness of a godless condition.

Nor must this godlessness be supposed a sinless condition. It is really a violation of all moral propriety. It is base injustice, the deepest ingratitude, unreasonable pride, and the completest selfishness. It is the condition of one who seizes upon the gifts of another, and is unmindful of the giver; of one who is willing to forego a regard for his Maker, if only his Maker will leave him alone, and keep from him that terrible death which he fears, and the still more terrible judgment that is to follow it. The total carelessness of a child for the parent that gave him birth—that has fed and clothed him all his days—is an imperfect type of this atheism of the heart. Men say unto God, "depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways." "A son honoreth his father, and a servant his master. If then I be a father, where is my honor; and if I be a master, where is my fear, saith the Lord of Hosts." (Mal. i. 6.)

Where God does not rule, some inferior authority must.

And when once God is thus banished from the hearts of men as their supreme law, his place is occupied by infinitely less worthy guests. It is evidently God's will that men should seek happiness from all around them. They have appetites and passions, faculties and affections; and all are, within their proper limits, appropriate impulses to action, and means of enjoyment. Let these powers be exercised in due subordination to the will of the Creator, and the happiness of man is perfect. Passion is under the control of reason, and reason and passion obedient to God. But when the higher power is withdrawn, and God is banished from the heart, man becomes "sensual, earthly, devilish." He fulfills "the desires of the flesh and of the mind;" he seeks the present, regardless of the future; the temporal, to the neglect of the eternal. What is good in the lowest sense, and what is pleasant to the taste or eyes, not what is holy, or just, or true, becomes his first question. Appetite and unhallowed inclination take God's place. The highest motive ceases; lower motives succeed to it; sometimes sensual, sometimes social, but always earthly and selfish; till at length the description of the Holy Ghost is a literal reality: "God looked down from heaven to see if there were any that did understand, that did seek God; . . . there is none that doeth good, no, not one." Ps. liii. 2.

God an object of enmity, or his character denied.

The next step in this downward progress is either positive enmity against God, or a positive denial of his character; hatred, that is, or practical atheism. Whatever change takes place in man, the law of God remains unchanged. Man has fixed his affection upon the creature instead of the Creator. The law of selfishness has taken the place of the law of love; and in consequence, what is really lovely in God is not loved, but either abhorred or disowned. Poetical conceptions of the Creator may still be admired. The natural attributes of the true God may be studied with all the enthusiasm which is excited by what is in the highest degree sublime; but God's *moral* character is neither studied nor admired. It is either hated or disowned. Admit His omniscience, and it is hated, because it brings under its piercing inspection the secret recesses of our nature.

Admit His holiness, and it is hated, because it is opposed to our sins. Admit His justice, and it is hated, because it will recompense to every man according to his works. Admit even his goodness, and it is hated, for it is goodness exercised *under moral conditions*, giving happiness only to the holy or the penitent. So long indeed as these attributes are restrained or controlled by the exercise of divine forbearance, or so long as the feelings which exist in the heart are not made matter of reflection, this enmity of human nature may be concealed; but once let God's true character appear and be pressed upon our thoughts, and the opposition of our character to his will shows itself in all its intensity. Our hearts are not hostile merely, they are hostility itself. Rom. viii. 7. Disown these attributes, and God himself is disowned.

And this is the condition of our nature: selfish, seeking our personal happiness at any cost; godless, obeying even God's law from no regard to Divine authority, cherishing towards Him no feelings such as become our relation to Him, and either hating His perfections, or seeking peace in denying them.

Conceive this state as eternal.

Conceive this state as eternal. Suppose men to enter the unseen world with this moral character unchangeably stamped upon them for ever; intelligent creatures knowing no law but passionate selfishness; each seeking his own gratification at the expense of the happiness of the rest; refusing to submit themselves to the law of God; preferring the government of their corrupt nature, and given over to the government they have preferred; at perpetual war with infinite holiness and goodness—sustained, as those attributes are, by almighty power; the knowledge of those attributes creating despair, that despair rendered the more agonizing by reproaches of conscience: and the awful result is selfishness, passion, enmity to holiness, growing daily and for ever more intense. Such is the destiny for which, if Divine grace prevent not, men are preparing.

It is to counteract these tendencies, and to avert this destiny, that the gospel has been revealed.

This state is described in Scripture as death.

27. If we turn to Scripture and ask the consequence of this condition, we find it summed in one word—it is "death;" while, on the contrary, the salvation of the gospel is described as "eternal life," through Jesus Christ our Lord.

It is so in four senses:

Very impressive are these descriptions. Let us mark what they involve. (1) Men are sinners; they have broken the divine command, and have therefore incurred the penalty of transgression; they are DEAD IN LAW. "The soul that sinneth it shall die," (Eze. xviii. 4.) is God's own sentence. The malefactor, who has been tried and found guilty of some capital offence, is, the moment his sentence is pronounced, in this condition. He is held to be dead in law. Thenceforth he can claim no rights; he can exercise no civil function; his property and life even belong to the State. There may be delay in the execution of the sentence and successive reprieves; yet is he, in the certainty of his destiny, and in the denial of all present immunities, *a dead man.* So with sinners: "As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." (Gal. iii. 10). "He that believeth not is condemned already; because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." (John iii. 18.) (2) Men in this condition are DEAD TO HOLY AFFECTIONS. The emotions of spiritual life are not known. As the blind man is dead to the beauty of color, and the deaf man to the harmonies of music, so is the sinner to all noble and divine feeling. Sin is not hated, nor is God loved. (3) Men are DEAD TO RIGHTEOUSNESS. The law is holy, but they are "carnal," sold under sin." They are "not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can they be." The language of the inspired Apostle is emphatically true of them: that which they allow not, they do, and what they would, they do not. (Rom. vii. 15.) Conscience may approve of Divine law; but there is another law in their members warring against the law of their minds, and bringing them into captivity to the law of sin. Even in the regenerate there are traces of this struggle; but in *them* the new nature is ever victorious. In the unregenerate it is not the new nature which struggles, but conscience only. They are guilty and helplessly guilty; as powerless for movements of holiness, as dead men are powerless for the movements of common life—a powerlessness of will confirmed by habitual transgression. And (4) to complete the idea involved in these terms, Men are DEAD TO HAPPINESS. Sin always brings misery; sin is misery; and sin unchecked brings misery as lasting and illimitable as are the obligations it has disowned.

Such is man's natural state. He is dead in law—dead in the benumbing influence of depraved affection—dead in enfeebled powers—dead to the blessedness and purity in which he was created. Of this moral corruption the death of the body is the emblem and result; deeply significant, but representing only a small portion of the effects of human guilt, or of the punishment justly due to transgressors of a holy, perfect law.

Death of the body an emblem.

The Gospel contemplates a four-fold change called life.

28. Now, it is with reference to this four-fold aspect of sin, that the salvation of Christ presents itself most clearly to the Christian. As sin brings death, so salvation brings life: LIFE in the cancelment of the sentence of the broken law; for Christ has redeemed us from the curse; being made a curse for us: LIFE in quickening our dead feelings by the regenerating influence of his Spirit through the truth: LIFE

in endowing us with the powers of spiritual obedience. By the same Spirit we are dead unto the law, that we may live unto God; we live, and yet not we, but Christ in us, being made free from sin we have our fruit unto holiness, and the end, everlasting life; and lastly, LIFE in imparting eternal and unchanging joy. (Eph. ii. 1-5; Gal. ii. 19; Rom. vi. 22.)

The four-fold meaning of death really one—so of life.

As the four-fold view of death is really one, so is this four-fold view of life. "The wages" *i. e.* the desert and the actual consequence "of sin is death," in all senses: and, in all senses, the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Every effect of sin is repelled by his suffering and righteousness. For condemnation he gives pardon; for apathy or hatred, awakened or re-created love; for the guilty corruption of our faculties, the power of practical holiness; for mourning and heaviness, the garments of praise, and, at last, eternal blessedness. In every case, indeed, the body dies. But with the sinner death is an evidence of its corruption, and a type of his real spiritual condition. With the Christian, the body dies only in order that it may be renewed, not a "natural body, but a spiritual;" not "in weakness, but in power."

SECT. 4.—PALESTINE THE SCENE OF THE LABORS OF OUR LORD.

Its geographical position and peculiarities.

29. Midway between England and India, the lands of Eastern luxuriance and of Western civilization, lies one of the most remarkable countries of the globe, Palestine,*—the land of the shepherds—so called from the pursuit of tribes who early peopled it. It is about two hundred miles long, and at

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* *Pali-stan* is the Sanscrit for *land of the Shepherds.*

widest seventy miles broad, a small region, which at times reckoned more than five millions of inhabitants,* and now containing less than one-tenth of that number. Once it was the most beautiful country on the earth, and is now a desolation, hardly able to maintain the scattered population who occupy it. Its ancient inhabitants are a byeword on the earth.

Shut in on all sides.

The geographical appearances of the region are also remarkable. It seems shut in on all sides. Its western boundary is the Great Sea, the sea on whose shores lie the mouldering remains of the ancient kingdoms of Egypt, of Greece, of Carthage, and of Rome. And yet that sea was never covered with the commerce of the Jews. On the southwest, "as thou comest to Gaza," it is desert. On the south, a range of high hills and the barren sands of the Arabah forbid all access to the wilderness of Sinai, and the waters of the Red Sea. On the east, we have the sandy plains of Arabia, stretching away to the great river, "the river Euphrates:" and, on the north, the bands,† of what was once the settlement of Asher, are still "iron and brass," a mountain chain terminating on the snow-capped summits of Lebanon. Horses and ships, (both those of the sea and those of the desert‡) were alike forbidden to the inhabitants of this region, and it was clearly intended that they should live alone among the nations.

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* Western authorities have doubted whether a country so small could have maintained five millions of people, or five hundred to each square mile. Holland is nearly as populous; the West riding of Yorkshire is quite so; but India supplies the completest reply. In its most fertile parts six hundred souls are found to a square mile; and, even in the north-west provinces, the population to the square mile is between three and four hundred.

† The more accurate rendering of Deut. xxxiii. 25.

‡ The camel is called in Eastern speech, "the ship of the desert."

Fitted by position to influence other nations.

And yet this region seems adapted to play no unimportant part in the history of our race. It is nearly in the centre of the ancient world, equally distant from the heart of Asia, of Africa, and of Europe, and on the high road between them all. One of its plains has been a battle-field of successive armies, for more than 3000 years.* Assyrians and Persians, Persians and Greeks, Jews and Gentiles, Crusaders and Saracens, Egyptians and Turks, Arabs and Franks, have all fought here; and here, in very recent times, a victory was gained by Bonaparte, which might have changed the destinies of the East. From this region have flowed the truths and precepts which have civilized and blessed the earth. All western nations look to it as the origin of their greatness, and Mohammed himself has extolled the religion for which it is illustrious: the religion of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: the religion which was taught by the lips, and embodied in the life of the Son of God. All indeed that is commendable in the teaching of that false prophet is taken from those disclosures which the earlier religion of the people of this district had revealed.

Represents all climes.

Nor is it uninteresting to glance over the surface of this region, and mark its peculiarities. Here, by the sea-board, lie the beautiful plains of Philistia and Sharon; and between the two ranges of hills, (the Eastern and Western Ghauts, as we may call them,) which run nearly parallel from north to south throughout the whole land, lies the valley of the Jordan, reaching from the sides of Lebanon to the Dead Sea. Beyond Lebanon again, the valley stretches away still northward (under the name of Cœlo-Syria), to the very centre of Asia the Less. This mountain range of Lebanon, it may be noticed, rises to the height of 10,000 feet, and is covered, during most part of the year, with snow. On its sides and at its base are found most of the productions both of the tropical and of the temperate zones. Near the summit are the cedar and fir. Higher still are the lichens and moss of the polar regions. Around the centre belt grow the oak and other hard woods of Europe, with corn and olives. Lower still is the vine; and over Damascus and Palmyra may be still seen groves of the palm and the fig. Similar districts of hill and valley cover the whole country. Here in the north is the pasture-ground of Carmel, where the prophet Amos fed his flocks. Here near Jericho, the city of palm-trees, is perpetual summer. Everywhere there is enough to justify the hope that one day in seven, and even one year in seven, might be kept free from toil, and yet the people live in the midst of abundance. A careful observer, moreover, looking only at the surface of the country itself, would pronounce it the fitting residence of a hardy and prosperous race. It combines the bracing cold of Darjeeling with the fruitfulness of the alluvial districts of Bengal or Gujerat. Here may have lived a race who combined the qualities of the patriotic Swiss with those of the accomplished Greek, or the fortitude of the Affghan, with the softness and repose of the Bengali, the virtues of both without the vices of either.

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* The plain of Esdraelon or Megiddo, near Acre.

Of the unevenness of these regions, and the consequent variety of temperature and production, we may judge from the fact that this river, the Jordan, springs from hills whose base is more than 2000 feet above its final resting place in the Dead Sea, and the surface of that sea is nearly 3000 feet lower than Jerusalem, though only twenty miles distant; while Jerusalem itself is so surrounded by hills, as to be an emblem of the good; for "as the mountains are round about" it, "so the Lord is about them that fear him."

Lessons in relation to God's purpose, and

30. Clearly if it had been one purpose of the Christian faith to foster a spirit of superstitious reverence for places, no country in the world would have furnished richer materials than "the land of the Bible." That faith is indeed almost as much superior to heathen systems in touching incident, historical associations, and hoar antiquity, as it is in spiritual truth. It is in this region, this central spot of the earth, this temperate and tropical clime, this country of industry, of diligence, and of tempting repose, that we find the scenes of the life we are about to describe. The country is itself a microcosm, a picture of the world, and admirably fitted to be the theatre of facts destined to influence the condition of the whole human race. With this view it was at first chosen, for "when the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, . . . he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel." Deut. xxxii. 8. The selected family was placed there, that God might be the more readily exalted among the heathen, and at last known throughout the earth.

in relation to Christ's work.

31. It is instructive, too, to notice that it is to this region that the personal ministry of our Lord was confined, though his Gospel was finally to be diffused throughout the earth. In his relation to our race of every kindred and of all lands, he is the second Adam; yet he was born in that little land of promise, under the Mosaic law, within the range of a temporary and local covenant; and to that land he restricted his ministry. He might have acted upon another principle. The same wisdom that in his boyhood confounded the doctors of his own nation might have been displayed, if he had chosen it, at an earlier age, and the holy child Jesus might have preached the gospel in that country where his kindred sought refuge. Endowing himself with the miraculous gifts which he reserved to celebrate the

completion of his work and his ascension to his Father, he might have visited land after land, proclaiming to all mankind in their own tongue the truths which he came to reveal. He might have been the first to carry the gospel to Rome, and have followed the profligate Tiberius to his retreat at Capreæ, and have reasoned there on righteousness, and temperance, and judgment, till he, like an inferior ruler of a later time, had trembled on his throne. "He might have anticipated the labors of his servant Paul, by bearing the news of the unknown God, and of the resurrection, to the philosophers at Athens. To the Roman people he might have declared himself the great deliverer, of whom their Virgil had recently sung; and the sages of Greece might have been compelled to own in him that heavenly teacher for whom their Socrates had longed; and the nations of the East, then intently looking for the advent of a king whose dominion was to be a universal one, might have learned from our Lord's own lips the spiritual nature of that kingdom which they justly but blindly expected."* Instead of taking this course, however, he remained in Judea; nor, except during one visit to the coast of Tyre and Sidon, did his personal instructions reach beyond the bounds of the promised land. It is evident that the primary object of his coming was not to teach the nations; not so much, in fact, to reveal a gospel, as to *act* one; to lay the foundation of those truths which his Apostles were afterwards to proclaim abroad. He was himself the truth, and in what he *did and suffered* the greater part, incomparably, of the work of human salvation was to be achieved. For a life of holy, quiet obedience, (and such was His as our example) it was essential that the Son of Man should neither strive nor cry, nor let his voice be heard in the streets. For a life of intense and mysterious suffering (such was His life as a substitutionary sacrifice) it was no less essential that he should move on a narrow stage: and, above all, was it essential that His life and death should be first accomplished, before the message of mercy, a message justified only by his suffering, should be communicated to the nations. The very restrictedness of his sphere, therefore, and the quiet, unostentatious character of his personal labors, are really among the evidences of the divinity of his mission. They are explained by the prominence which he himself attached to his death. It was the end of his life to die: and he left it to his Apostles after his death to carry the doctrines, of which that death was the embodiment and the foundation, throughout Judea, and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. Acts i. 8.

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* See *Christ a Home Missionary,* by Dr. Williams.

SECT. 5.—THE GOSPELS THE RECORD OF THE LIFE OF OUR LORD.

Meaning of the term.

32. The record of the life of Christ is found in the Gospels, a word meaning, in this connection, the record of *good news*, and corresponding exactly to the Greek term by which this portion of sacred Scripture is distinguished. At first the name was given to the message, which began to be given when the angels announced to the shepherds of Bethlehem that the Messiah was born. Afterwards it was given to the books in which the message is now contained.

The writers were called, by a name borrowed from the Greek, Evangelists.

The Gospels not biographies, but memoirs.

33. These Gospels were written at different times, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, by the men whose names they bear. It was the object of the writers, not to give a complete history of the Saviour's life, or of his miracles and discourses, but to record such facts and discourses as might explain the

nature, and prove to different readers the Divine origin of the Christian faith. "Many other *signs*" (miracles, that is, which give evidence of a Divine mission) "did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name." John xx. 30, 31. The four books make, not a biography, but a memoir, and are yet adapted, by their unity and diversity, to give such a complete view of the life of our Lord as shall interest and instruct all classes of character in every age.

The Gospel by Matthew.

34. The first Gospel by Matthew, or as Matthew viewed and was directed to record it (*κατὰ Ματϑαῖον*),* was intended for pious Hebrews and for the Jews generally. The author therefore gives no explanation of Jewish customs, or of Jewish topography. He traces the genealogy of our Lord through his reputed father to Abraham, and shows how the New Testament is the fulfillment of the Old. He exhibits Christ chiefly in his earthly relations and character, as the Lawgiver and Teacher of the Church; and his Gospel was sometimes called on this account, the earthly or material one.

The Gospel by Mark.

35. The Second Gospel was written at Rome, for the instruction of Roman converts. Jewish customs and places have consequently explanations appended; narrative is preferred to discourse; and the writer dwells upon the actions rather than upon the teaching of our Lord. His Gospel is thoroughly practical; and though he has added but twenty-four verses which are not found in the Gospels of Matthew or Luke, the whole is recast so as to be adapted to the energetic and practical habits of the Roman people.

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* Perhaps, however, this phrase is merely Hellenistic for *τοῦ Ματϑαίου*.

The Gospel by Luke.

36. The third Gospel was written by Luke for the use of the Greeks. Here, again, Christ appears under another aspect; not as the minister of the circumcision, which is his character in Matthew; nor yet as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, his character in Mark; but as the Saviour of the world. His genealogy is traced through his mother to Adam, the head of the whole human family. While Matthew speaks of the twelve Apostles who were sent to Israel, Luke speaks also of the seventy disciples, who were sent as to the nations of the earth. Several parables are found in this Gospel alone; and among them "the Good Samaritan" and "the Prodigal Son;" the one humbling to Jewish pride, and the other cheering to the Gentile penitent. Jewish customs and chronological statements are made intelligible to a foreigner; while the fullness of the record of the discourses of our Lord meets the curiosity of the Grecian character.

The Gospel by John.

37. In the fourth Gospel we have something that meets the higher speculative tendencies of men. This Gospel corrects much that was false in the Jewish and Grecian systems of religious philosophy, and completes what was deficient in previous revelations. None has spoken so fully as its author of the Divine character of our Lord, or of the inward spiritual life which springs from union with him. As Matthew's Gospel was called the *material* one, John's was called the *spiritual* or divine. Hence it is that his Gospel begins with a statement of the divine nature of the Word, by whom all things were made; while among the last things it records is the confession of Thomas, which repeats in the twentieth chapter the truth which John had stated in the beginning of the first. In the other Evangelists the Saviour is represented as moving in the mournful majesty of his humiliation. Here, though there is much of humiliation, there is more of power. *They* love to dwell on his relations to the earth: this

Apostle to proclaim his relations to Heaven. In reading Matthew and Luke and Mark, we might forget that in the humble teacher of Galilee we are listening to Him who was the Divine Word; while in John the Manhood seems almost lost in the fullness of the God.

All compared.

38. Thus is it that the Gospel stands "four square," with a side fronting each side of the spiritual world and of human character. Matthew addresses the Jew, Luke the inquisitive Greek and men in every age. Mark shows the power and vital force of truth, and John its attractive and subduing love. Matthew exhibits chiefly the Jewish, and the human, John the spiritual and divine in our Redeemer; Mark, his official character; Luke, his personal history. In all combined we have not incongruity, but variety and fullness; and everywhere Jesus is represented as the Messiah, the Teacher, the Pattern, and the God.

It is quite consistent with these distinctions that the different Evangelists have each employed a peculiar diction.

Peculiarities of diction and thought.

39. Matthew quotes largely from the Old Testament; prefacing his quotations by the formula, "Then was fulfilled," (or, This was done that there might be fulfilled) "that which was spoken by the prophet."* Jerusalem is called the Holy City. "The Kingdom of heaven" is his common title for what is elsewhere called "the kingdom of God;" and "our heavenly Father" is a phrase applied in Matthew to God much more frequently than in the other Gospels.

Luke entirely avoids all Aramæan and Hebrew words, (such as "Rabbi," "Amen," &c.); speaks of the "Lake" of Tiberias, not of the *Sea;* and connects in a remarkable ay mental acts with the heart, (Luke i. 66, iii. 15,) conveying in this phraseology a great moral truth. "Saviour" and "salvation" are found only in Luke, except that they occur once in John. "Grace" (unmerited favor) is peculiar to Luke and John. "To bring glad tidings" is frequently found in Luke, and but once in Matthew. The *Law* in Luke is not once named, as that word must have been, in the peculiar scriptural sense of it (Mosaic Law,) unintelligible to his readers.

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* Fully written in chap. i. 22, ii. 15, afterwards more briefly.

John has a large number of phrases which he uses in a deep Christian sense. "The world," "the flesh," "death," "life," "the word," "the light," "the truth," "born of God," "to know," "to believe," "the Comforter," "to live in love," "to walk in light," &c., are employed with peculiar meaning, often both in a literal and in a figurative sense. These expressions, as used by the latest of the Evangelists, illustrate beautifully the gradual unfolding of Divine truth; while they send us for the solution of much that appears mysterious in the teaching of our Lord to the disclosures of his Apostles. (John xvi.12–15.)

All combined in the following pages. Christ's life the embodiment of all truth and

40. In the following pages we intend to combine these views: now giving the facts in chronological order, and now grouping them together for the illustration and enforcement of religious truth. The law of gradual development which, rightly explained, pervades all the works of God, spiritual not less than physical, points also to the necessity of examining that life in its connection both with the past and the future. The Gospels include a Jewish element, are built upon Jewish history, authenticate themselves by Jewish prophecy, and proclaim their great object to be the fulfillment of Jewish types. We must therefore understand the ancient system of the Jewish people. They appeal also both to Jews, and to Greeks, and, through these nations, to all whom they represent. We must, therefore, understand the pride, the self-reliance, the spiritual igno-

rance, and the formality of the first class, and the prevalent philosophy of the second. Above all, these Gospels, contain, not so much the doctrine of Christ, as the facts on which that doctrine is based. And therefore we must compare the life with the religious system, the facts with the explanations of them which inspired men have supplied. Our theme, then, though it be the life of our Lord, is really the life of our Lord as the centre of the whole of the dispensations of God, the point to which all previous revelations converge, and whence light streams down to our own times. The Gospel may be called a biography; but it is a biography that illustrates and harmonises ALL HISTORY, forms the basis of all evangelic truth, and sums up all previous disclosures of the Divine will. It is a life, illimitable in duration, connection, and dependencies. The plans which it embodies were formed before the foundation of the earth; and the victories it achieved are, in their influence, everlasting. He is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending.* He is the subject of the first and of the latest promise.† He begins and closes both dispensations;‡ and His work and honor will form the theme of an eternal song.§

of all excellence.

41. But the life and character of Christ not only form the substance of both dispensations, they are the model of all excellence. It is a proof and a consequence of his Divine nature that his example is universally applicable. As we have a many-sided Gospel for instruction, so we have a many-sided character as our pattern. Human examples are only partial exhibitions of virtue. They are moulded by circumstances, and fitted only for departments of duty. Hence it is impossible for one man to follow implicitly the footsteps of another, without some

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* Rev. i. 8. † Gen. iii. 15; Rev. xxii. 20.

‡ Gen. i-iii; Mal. iii. iv.; Matt. i.; Rev. xxii.

§ Rev. i. 5, 6; 2 Pet. iii. 18.

deviations from that line of conduct which the providence of God has assigned him. What was graceful in the human model, becomes forced and childish in the copy. But in imitating Christ no man is led out of his sphere. HE is all mankind's epitome. Every movement after him is performed with ease, and His likeness sits becomingly on all who bear it. The rich and the poor, the contemplative and the active, the gifted and the ungifted, men of every class and of all dispositions, find in Him the teaching they need; and all are led, by looking to Him, into that path which is most suitable for them. He is the contrast of all that men should shun, and the perfection of all they should copy. Let the restless or active, who are tempted to embody all religion in practical devotedness, contemplate His nights of prayer. Let the indolent trace the progress of His labors of love. The high and lofty learn humility when they behold Him washing the feet of His disciples. The fastidious, when they see Him mingling freely with publicans and sinners, are taught to deny themselves for the sake of truth and usefulness. The poor learn contentment from Him who had not where to lay His head; the rich, benevolence in contemplating Him who was the unspeakable gift: and all see in Him the highest example brought low, and yet losing nothing of its perfectness. This many-sidedness is an evidence of His Divine nature, and it invests with a proportionate value the examination and study of His life. Not even the examples of inspired Apostles can supply, in this respect, the place of Christ. If we copy Paul, we shall be in danger of caricaturing his virtues, and shall certainly neglect the grace in which his character was deficient. If John be made our model, we shall excel in love, but not, probably, in strength. Both were defective copies of Christ; and if we imitate them, our rule will be imperfect, and we shall lose the very principle to which they owed their excellences, their determination, namely to copy, not one another, but Christ Jesus their Lord.

Christ's life peculiarly important from the times.

42. The importance which is thus seen to belong to the Gospels from their connection with the whole of the dispensations of God is increased by the peculiar aspect of our times. In the days of Luther the Epistles formed the battle-ground of the faith; and the *doctrinal significance* of the Gospels was the chief subject of inquiry and discussion. Men admitted the facts, but overlooked or denied the inferences which inspired Apostles drew from them. Now, on the contrary, it is not so much the inferences which are denied, as the *facts* themselves. Foiled in their attempts to subvert the truths of one part of Scripture, the enemies of Christianity have gathered up their broken weapons, and assail another. No Christian, no man of intelligence, can fear the result. But we must follow the foe to the field he has chosen. It is not the doctrines of the Gospel which are now directly assailed, but the facts on which these doctrines rest. Neither are outposts of our faith. Both are vital; but the facts are in one respect the more important. An objective religion is essential to a subjective one; facts to feelings; and historical to doctrinal truth. The one is the basis of the other; and if the foundation be destroyed, what shall the righteous do?

Nor is it only as Christians we use this language. Lord Bacon, as a philosopher, calls Theology the haven of all sciences. More pointedly Madame de Staël affirms, that the history of the world resolves itself entirely into two periods—that which preceded Christ's appearance, and that which followed it. John Von Müller, the distinguished German historian, holds the same language. Animadverting on Herder's Philosophy of History, he says justly: "I find every thing here but Christ; and what is the history of the world without Christ?" In fact, all God's works, both in nature and in providence, looked forward to the life of our Lord, or have been influenced by it, and rightly to understand their lessons, we need rightly to understand and appreciate Him. Christ, in his character and cross, supplies the only element adequate to the solution of the great problems presented in the history of our race.

CHAPTER II.

§ 1. Events connected with the birth and childhood of our Lord.

§ 2. Christ perfect Man and perfect God.

§ 3. The Fullness of Time.

§ 4. State of the Jews when the Messiah appeared.

A HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS.

EVENTS CONNECTED WITH THE BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD OF OUR LORD. THIRTEEN YEARS AND A HALF.

Scripture.		Place.	Narrative.	Miracle.	Discourse.	Parable.
Matt.	Luke.					
	i. 1–4		Preface to St. Luke's Gospel.			
	i. 5–25	Jerusalem.		An angel appears to Zechariah.		
	i. 26–38	Nazareth.		An angel appears to Mary.		
	i. 39–56	Jutta ?	Mary visits Elizabeth.			
	i. 57–80	Jutta ?	Birth of John the Baptist.			
i. 18–25		Nazareth.		An angel appears to Joseph.		
	ii. 1–7	Bethlehem.		The birth of Jesus.		
	ii. 8–20	Near Beth.		An angel appears to Shepherds.		
	ii. 21–38	Beth. Jerus.	Jesus circumcised and presented in the Temple.			
ii. 1–12		Jerus. Beth.	The Magi.			
ii. 13–23	ii. 39, 40	Beth. Nazar.	The flight into Egypt. The return.			
	ii. 41–52	Jerusalem.	Jesus goes to the Passover.			
i. 1–17			Genealogy to Abraham thro' David and Joseph.			
	iii. 23–38		Genealogy to Adam through David and Mary.			

CHAPTER II.

SECT. 1.—EVENTS CONNECTED WITH THE BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD OF OUR LORD.

Completeness of Luke's Gospel, and naturalness.

1. OUR history begins with the Gospel of Luke. True to his principle of tracing the history of events from their source,* he only of the Evangelists gives account of the birth of John, the forerunner of our Lord, and of the occurrences which, even before his birth, united him and our Lord together in mysterious union.

In the very opening sentence we have characteristic remarks. Luke addresses *his friend*, tells him of his acquaintance with the things of which he is about to write, as no other evangelist does; thus bringing something of the style of a human composition to his holy task. He appears with the faculties and affections of a man, exercised with the things that engaged his thoughts, and addressing another in the same earthly strain. But, though his words assume this tone, the Holy Spirit is as simply and as fully in every thought, as if the writer had been entirely dependent upon his teaching. Our Lord in his own person delivered commands to his Apostles, and yet he is said to have given them through the Spirit.† The Beræans were more noble than the men of Thessalonica, and, giving heed to the message spoken by the Apostles, examined the Scriptures to

Though natural, not the less divine.

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* ἄνωθεν παρακολουθεῖν.—Luke i. 3.

† Acts i. 2.

ascertain its truth; and *therefore*, it is said, they believed; though elsewhere, both the attention which men exercise, and the faith in which it ends, are ascribed to God. Divine teaching has but seldom superseded human effort; and where God's grace most abounds, it abounds "in all wisdom and prudence."

Birth of John and of Christ.

2. The simplicity and naturalness of the following verses are remarkably impressive. They give notice of the kind of revelation which is at hand. "There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest." No pompous introduction, no startling announcement is here. All is calm, natural, and severely chaste, though the theme might have justified the most elaborate preparation.

The birth and parentage of John are first recorded. The scene is laid in the midst of human sympathies such as Luke loves to describe. In due time John is born, through the special gift of God endowing his parents with a natural faculty: then Jesus is born, the Son of God; not through any endowment of nature, but by the influence of the Creator Spirit, a miracle from the first; the one the child of a barren woman, the other of a virgin; both foretold at least four hundred years before they appeared, the one as the morning star, the other as the day; the one as the prophet of the Highest, the other the Highest himself.

Joy at Christ's advent.

3. Considering man's guilt and God's majesty, the advent of a God to our world might have been expected to be a season of awe. And a season of awe it is, but of awe full of gladness; such emotion being represented in Scripture as attending the Blessed God whenever he comes forth out of his place—awe only to his enemies, but to them that wait for him awe and gladness combined. The foundations of the first creation were laid with shouts of joy, and the sons of God sang together. The foundations of the new heaven and the new earth are here

laid, and all is gladness again. "Glory and honor are in his presence, strength and gladness in his place." 1 Chr. xvi. 27. The angels celebrate his praise: devout shepherds, hardly catching the meaning of the strain, repeat the song. The lips of Mary, and Zechariah, and Elizabeth, are unsealed; the expectation of Simeon is answered; the widowhood of Anna is blest; and the very babes leap for joy. Young men and maidens, old men and children, all bless the Lord together, and all exalt his name. This joy may soon be hushed in tears, and these children may be for the falling of many in Israel; but, so far as God is concerned, his work is perfect. Its final issue, moreover, will certainly be glorious; and, therefore, though the angels come to announce the advent of an infinitely holy Being to a world that was ruined and fallen, they come "singing 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will towards men;'" and the shepherds return the song, glorifying and praising Him for all they had heard and seen.*

Difference between the forerunner and the Messiah.

4. Even thus early, however, the difference between the master and the servant appears. John was welcomed as he that was to "prepare the way of the Lord." Christ, who was as to his personality Jesus, and as to his dignity and office the Christ, the Anointed One, is the Lord himself. John was great in his spiritual endowments, and in his relation to the Saviour. Christ was great as the Son of God, and as heir of a kingdom without end—not earthly and temporal, therefore, but spiritual and eternal. (i. 15, 17, 33.) John gives but the knowledge of salvation; salvation itself is the gift of Christ. (i. 32, 71, 77.) In their origin especially were they distinguished. John was the child of natural faculty; Jesus is born through the creative power

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* See *Lectures on the Gospel of St. Luke,* London, 1848; a beautiful exposition of this Gospel.

of the Most High.* Such was their relation to one another. They were united in the mystery of their birth, but, so far as we know, had little or no intercourse again; nor perhaps did they meet till both appeared amid other scenes, and in fulfillment of the solemn office to which God had called them.

Salvation already defined.

5. Already, too, is the nature of the salvation which Christ is to secure disclosed. It is to interest heaven and earth. God and angelic beings are concerned in its results. It fulfills a previous dispensation; for it is the substance of that mercy which was revealed in type unto the fathers (ver. 55, 72.) Its fruits are the deliverance of the church of God from all that hate her, that she may serve him in holiness and righteousness all her days; redemption from sin,† and the extension of these blessings to all nations. This last fact is remarkable and peculiar. The MAGNIFICAT of Mary is the expression of thankfulness for *personal* favor. The SONG of Zechariah celebrates personal mercy, and regards Christ only as the *national* deliverer. But the NUNC DIMITTIS of Simeon recognizes in him a light to lighten the *Gentiles*,‡ as well as the glory of his people Israel. This Gospel then is clearly a system of universal truth, at once redeeming and sanctifying all who receive it. Most appropriately, therefore, though the Jews first heard the tidings of the Advent, *the first act* of worship was paid by Gentiles; whose gifts proved a providential supply to the holy family when escaping from the jealous hatred of Herod, the head of the Jewish nation. (Matt. ii. 11–13.)

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* Note, *πνευμα ἁγιον*, equals here *δυναμις Ὑψιστου*; an interpretation required by other passages of Scripture, which represent Christ as the Son of the Father, not of the Spirit; and favored both by the absence of the article and by the parallelism of the verse.

† See Luke ii. 38; Matt. i. 21.

‡ *ἐθνη, λαος*; the first the name of those who were not the chosen people of God.

Wisdom as well as sovereignty in selecting the agency employed.

6. There is something instructive too in the character of those who were selected as witnesses and agents in these scenes. Things heavenly and things earthly are blended; priests and women, the poor carpenter the reputed father of our Lord, and the poor shepherds, all bear their part; and the tender mercy of God, which only could have accounted for such a revelation even if kings and princes had received it, is rendered doubly illustrious through the temporal condition of those to whom it was first given. And yet "the secret of the Lord is with them that *fear* him." The character of the great Teacher, no less than his condescension, are seen in the agents he employed. Eve fell through unbelief, and under its influence hoped to become like God. Mary *believed*, and under the influence of faith doubted not that God would become like men. Zechariah was a man of prayer. (i. 13.) Elizabeth recognized in the babe Christ *her Lord*, and with her husband had been previously walking in the ordinances and commandments of God blameless. (44.) Joseph was a *just* man; and Simeon *just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel.* It is difficult to tell which fact is the more significant—that those whom God thus favored were not among the noble and mighty, or that the qualities which he honored were holiness and faith.

Christ as a child.

7. The growth of Christ in stature and in wisdom is noticed here, and here only. Luke ii. 39–52. These glances at his childhood are all touching, and in keeping with the character of this Gospel; for thus the *man* is kept before us. His wisdom first appeared in the robe of humility. He heard and asked questions; surprising his hearers not by profound discourses unsuited to his years, but by his 'answers.' Already he was about his Father's business, though still subject to Mary and Joseph. He is the anointed child now, as by and bye he

will be the anointed man; in each season equally pleasing to God, consecrating to Him and to His laws every period of human life, in favor with God as well as with man. This description, though sufficient to set forth Christ, as a highly instructive pattern to the young in humility, in filial obedience, and in piety, suggests, by its very brevity, that the inspired author of the Gospel wrote under sacred control. Such a history as Xenophon has given of the youth of Cyrus; or as the early apocryphal biographies have given of our Lord, is much more in accordance with the natural tendency of the human mind; and but for inspiration, such a history the Evangelist would have written.

His Genealogy, and what it involved.

8. This history of the birth of Christ ends with his lineage. Nor are the tables given by the two Evangelists, Matthew and Luke, insignificant; the latter table tracing up his parentage through Mary to David and Adam, and the former through his reputed father Joseph to David and Abraham.

The appearance of the Messiah among the human race presupposes conditions both negative and positive: negative, that man needed redemption; and positive, that the Messiah must be obviously connected with the *race*, and not a portion separated from it. A double connection, with the ancient favored people of God and with the whole human family, was essential; and this connection is established here by such evidence as no other family records can produce. The genealogy, comprising three times fourteen generations on the father's side, and seventy-five generations on the mother's, extends over a period of two thousand and four thousand years respectively. The construction of such tables in an uninterrupted line, and relating to families that dwelt for a long time in retirement, would be inexplicable, had not their members an ultimate object of faith before them, which rendered the preservation of the lineage of deepest interest. It was foretold that the

Messiah was to be born from the race of Abraham and of David. The ardent desire to behold him, and to become identified with his mercy and glory, kept up attention to these records through a period embracing thousands of years. Each successive head of the lineage thus became easily distinguishable, and his presence and name kept alive the hope of a final fulfillment of the ancient predictions, till that hope was realised in the person of our Lord. If Messiah be the life of the world, we trace the first veins of that life in Adam. If he be the blossoming of human nature, we can trace its development from the very root. This connection with the race, and with the chosen family of the race, is thus not only the fulfillment of a prophecy: it has a deep spiritual meaning. He is a brother of us all; partner of our weakness and nature, bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh—the true KINSMAN-REDEEMER of men.

SECT. 2.—CHRIST PERFECT MAN AND PERFECT GOD.

Christ's twofold nature

9. Very noticeable is the language of Scripture on the twofold condition of the Messiah. He was man, and he was God: man, with all his peculiarities and weakness, (though without sin;) and God, with all his dignity and perfections.

Man in name and

10. HE WAS MAN. So he is *called*. Scripture speaks of him as "a man of sorrows;" as "a man approved of God;" as "the one Mediator between God and man, the *man* Christ Jesus." With touching condescension he calls himself by a name which his Apostles never employ, "the Son of Man." The whole story of his life represents him with the form and features of our nature. In our likeness he was found, and in our image he was fashioned.

in properties.

The *properties* of man are ascribed to him. He was hungry and thirsty, was weary, and rested and slept; he was subject to trials and pain; he was grieved, and wounded, and pierced; he died and was buried.

in relations.

He sustained human *relations.* He was the Son of Mary, the friend of Lazarus, and "the brother" (certainly the relative) of James.

in faculty.

He had the *mind* of man. By study of the Scriptures, and under the special teaching of the Holy Spirit, he "increased in wisdom." He gained his knowledge of the works of God, and of the mysteries of that spiritual kingdom to which they all belonged, as a man. His was a human judgment, and a human memory, and a human imagination. He was indeed without sin; but in every thing besides he became flesh, and was made "like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people."

God.

11. But HE WAS GOD ALSO. He *existed* and *acted* before he came in the flesh.[*] "All things were made by him."[†] He had glory with the Father "before the world was."[‡] He "came down from heaven."[§] He was rich before he was poor.[‖] To take the form of a servant, he "emptied or divested himself of his glory."[¶] The whole tenor of these passages implies previous dignity, and they would be unmeaning if he were man only.

Divine attributes are everywhere ascribed to him in Scripture. He is the "EVERLASTING FATHER," "the beginning and the ending, who was, and who is, and who is to come, the ALMIGHTY." He "upholds all things by the word of his power." He is "able to subdue all things unto himself." He knows all things. He searches the heart, he tries the thoughts of men. He is the only wise

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[*] John viii. 58.
[†] John i. 3.
[‡] John xvii. 5.
[§] John vi. 38.
[‖] 2 Cor. viii. 9.
[¶] Phil. ii. 6. 7.

GOD our Saviour," to whom be glory for ever.* He HAS LIFE in himself, and is ever PRESENT with his church. "Where two or three are gathered together in his name, there is he in the midst of them."†

He is *called* by the name of God in the New Testament, and by the incommunicable name of Jehovah in the Old. "The Word (the utterance, that is, of infinite wisdom) was God." Of the Jews Christ came, and he "is over all, God blessed for ever." We wait for his coming, the "appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ." On the very charge of making himself equal with God he was condemned. He, therefore, "is the true God and eternal life."‡

Statements explained by his two-fold nature.

12. It is under this double character that we mark the following peculiarities in his life. The inspired writers attribute to him all human properties and relations, such even as seem at first sight inconsistent with his Godhead. He was tempted, he prayed, he was heard in that he feared; with strong crying and tears he presented his petitions; he was troubled in spirit; he had angels to comfort him; he had limited knowledge, for he knew not the time of the day of judgment. With startling simplicity are all these facts recorded: and it can hardly excite surprise that reverence for his dignity, though in this case falsely applied, has attempted in every age to modify the form, or to soften the meaning of the terms in which these truths have been conveyed.

Let no Christian, however, scruple to employ these expressions, or to give them their appropriate meaning.

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* Isa. ix. 6; Rev. i. 8; Phil. iii. 21; Heb. i. 3; John xxi. 17; Jude 25; Rev. ii. 23.

† Matt. xviii. 20; xxiii. 28; John v. 26.

‡ John i. 1; Rom. ix. 5; Tit. ii. 13; 1 John v. 20. For the Old Testament see Gen. xvi. 7, 13; Hos. xii. 4, 5; Is. xl. 3; (John i. 23;) Mal. iii. 1; (John iii. 28;) Isa. vi. 1—10; (John xii. 41.)

What may seem to be gained by restricting them, will be lost in the diminished fitness of Christ for his office as our Sacrifice and Advocate; in the unintelligibleness of the evangelical history; the introduction of a partial system of interpretation, and the exaltation of human reason above the plain and obvious import of Scripture. Such passages contain a truth as precious as it is obvious, as consolatory as it is ennobling. He stooped to our nature, that he might make us partakers of his own.

Acts as God in his own name.

It is a natural result of the dignity of his character, and indeed an evidence of it, that he wrought miracles in his own name, claimed God-like authority in all his teaching, and received with acceptance the Divine honors that were paid him. With authority and power he commanded the unclean spirits, and they came out. He rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace, be still; and the wind ceased, and there was a great calm:" an act of power which the Jews regarded as appropriate only to Jehovah, and which drew from the disciples the confession, "Of a truth thou art the Son of God." The prayer of the leper was, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean," and the reply of our Lord, "I will; be thou clean." "The Son," said he, on another occasion, "quickeneth whom he will." So fully did he identify himself with Him whose counsel shall stand, and who will do all his pleasure. In marked contrast is the language of the Apostles, who speak uniformly in terms of delegated authority. "I command thee," said Paul, "in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, to come out of her."*

When he ascended, he gave gifts to men. He granted signs and wonders to be done by the hands of Paul and Barnabas. His name, through faith in his name, made the lame man strong. "Æneas," said Peter on another occasion, "Jesus Christ maketh thee whole."*

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* Mark iv. 39; Matt. viii. 2, 3; John v. 21; Acts xvi. 18.

Receives divine honors.

Nor less striking is his reception of Divine honor. He wrought miracles that he himself might be glorified by them,† while the Apostles disclaimed both the power and the praise; and when the people were about to offer sacrifices to them for miracles they had wrought, "they rent their clothes, and ran in among the crowd, crying out and saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you."

Concerning Christ, moreover, it is said that angels worshipped him.‡ The Apostles testified that they beheld his glory, as the glory of the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.§ Thomas addressed him as "my Lord and my God;" and Jesus spoke of this language as the utterance of faith simply, and pronounced all others blessed who, without the same evidence, should express like conviction. He commanded his disciples to baptize (not, surely, in the name of God, and of man, and of an attribute, but) in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. He forgave sins, and received homage for the bestowment of such grace. As he was taken up to heaven, the Apostles worshipped him; and they besought him when in glory, as he knew the hearts of men, to show whom he had chosen in the room of Judas. Stephen invoked his name as he fell asleep, and said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Paul sought his help for the removal of a thorn in the flesh, and Christ heard and relieved him, not by fulfilling the letter of his prayer, but by higher communications of strength. Repeatedly the inspired writers of the Epistles beseech him to comfort and establish the churches, to direct the path of his servants, to give grace and love to those who believed; and as frequently do they ascribe dominion, and honor, and glory, and power "to Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." Such, too, is the song of the heavenly hosts.* Christ is evidently the theme of adoration in heaven and on earth.

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* Acts ix. 33. † John xi. ‡ Heb. i. 6.
§ John i. 14.

Let these facts, with the whole tenor of Scripture, be studied. Let it be remembered that they are recorded in a volume which condemns all idolatry, and most of which was addressed to a people who expected a Messiah, that was to be honored equally with the Father; and the conclusion is irresistible that Christ was not man only, but man and God gloriously and mysteriously combined. Deny either truth, and the language of Scripture becomes contradictory or unintelligible.

Apparent inconsistencies reconciled.

13. It is a natural consequence of this double character, that some things are ascribed in Scripture to Christ generally, which are true only of Christ as human; and that others are ascribed to Christ which are true only of Christ as Divine; while, for most of his work he needed both natures.

Nor let the first of these facts excite surprise. There is much analogous to it in the language of common life. Man is constituted of body and mind. In every human being these two opposite principles are so united as to form but one person. The peculiar properties of each remain unchanged, and the acts of each are ascribed to both. We say with equal propriety that man walks, or thinks, or moves, or loves; though one set of these acts belongs properly to the body, and the other to the soul. Even when the terms we employ are direct contraries, we never hesitate to use them in describing the complex man. It is equally true that he is mortal and immortal—that he is corporeal and spiritual. The sentence of God to our first parents creates no misgiving—"Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return:" we still apply it to man, though it is fulfilled only in the history of the body; a far different destiny awaits the soul. And as in man we have two distinct elements, matter and spirit, so in Christ we have the human nature—body and soul—in union with the Divine: the human in all its weakness, though without sin; and the Divine in all its dignity and perfection.

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* John xx. 28; Matt. xxviii. 19; Luke vii. 47, 48; xxiv. 52; Acts i. 24; vii. 59; 2 Cor. xii. 8, 9; Heb. xiii. 21; 2 Pet. iii. 18; Rev. i. 5, 6; v. 13.

This analogous case may help us to understand many passages in the life of our Lord; while it serves to reconcile apparent contradictions which some in forgetfulness of it have seemed to discover in the sacred page.

Both parts of his nature needed for most of his work of mediation.

14. Most, however, of the statements of Scripture concerning Christ are true of him in both characters. In the work, for example, of his mediation, it is impossible to separate the idea of his Divine perfection from that of his humanity. As Mediator he was God, but God "manifest in the flesh." We see his humiliation, for he was the partner of our weakness. But to form a just conception of his office, we need to remember the infinite condescension that assumed it. As our Friend and Priest, he is a brother man. But a true conception of either character involves the recognition of the homage that is due to him as God over all, an Almighty Friend, a spotless Priest. We confide at once in his sympathy and power, in his meekness and majesty, in his Divinity and humanity. His very nature, in fact, fills the wide interval between the Creator and the creature, and unites both. His person is thus a symbol of his works, and sets forth at once the means and the end of our salvation. Thus it is, that in contemplating every part of his office, faith, and gratitude, and holy reverence, are combined. The fear of his eternal power and Godhead is

strangely blended with the emotions which are excited by attributes of his character allying him to ourselves.

"Son of Man" and "Son of God."

15. This double truth is beautifully illustrated in the titles given Him in Scripture, "Son of man," and "Son of God." The first indicates his condescension, his sympathy, and his relation to ourselves; its full force depending, however, on the second, "the Son of God." If we use one phrase only, each is robbed of its emphasis, and of most of its interest. Using both, so as to combine and contrast them, we make them doubly significant. The meaning of the *first* we have seen; what then is involved in the second? Clearly, comparing the passages indicated below, it may be affirmed that he is so called on account of the divine agency put forth in his conception;* the peculiar love and favor which the Father bears him;† his most perfectly filial temper;‡ his possession of the Divine nature;§ his conformity to the Divine will;‖ his title to inherit the kingdom of the Father;¶ and, in one word, on account of his character, nature, and office, as the appointed King, and Prophet, and Priest of the Church.** He is therefore Son of God and Son of Man. God-man in one person for ever: the precious bond of union between the criminal and the judge, between heaven and earth, between our fallen state and our restoration to more than primeval purity and bliss.

Theories of the union of two natures in Christ.

16. Nothing is easier than on such a question to multiply words without knowledge, and to speculate on the point of how three are one, and one is three. Many eminent names have lent their sanction to such speculations. Augustine illustrated the whole doctrine by supposing that the Divine nature is like

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* Luke i. 35. † Matt. iii. 17. ‡ John v. 30; Matt. xxvi. 39.
§ John xix. 7; x. 30. ‖ John v. 19; viii. 28.
¶ John v. 22, 23; iii. 35.
** Acts xiii. 32, 33; John i. 14; John x. 33–36; Heb. v. 5.

the three faculties of the mind—the memory, the understanding, and the will. Melancthon held that God from his infinite understanding produces thought, and that to this thought (which bore his image) he imparted personality, and that this personality is his Son. "God," says another eminent writer, "God reflecting on and conceiving himself, is God the Father. God conceived as his own most glorious image, is God in the person of his Son. God enjoying himself as his own chiefest good, in relation to the Father and the Son, is God the Holy Ghost."* Others, including many of the earlier writers of the Church, held that the Son is God *of* God, and that he has the same Divine nature as the Father, but that he received it by communication from him. Others still (including the whole sect of the Sabellians) taught that God is one Being only, and that there is no distinction of persons in the Godhead at all. On this theory, it is the same God exhibiting himself under different aspects. As God the Creator, he is the Father; as God the Redeemer, he is the Son; as God the agent of illumination and holiness, he is the Holy Ghost.

Contrasted with Scripture teaching.

17. Now, without attempting to point out how far these theories are true or false, it may be said that they all contain something which is theory only. In many respects they are remarkably analogous to speculations which have been entertained both in ancient Greece and in modern India. But in the very spirit and form they assume, they stand out in strong contrast to the simple teaching of the Bible. The world was ruined by sin; a broken law needed to be upheld; life and immortality, the very hope of which had become nearly extinct, had to be brought to light; provision was to be made for man's pardon and holiness; for pardon on principles of justice, and for holiness with due regard to his im-

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* Dr. Chauncy.

perfection. To meet these conflicting claims, God the Father, whose law had been broken, too just to pass by transgression, yet unwilling to inflict the penalty upon the sinner, sent his beloved Son. That Son, the object of universal adoration, took upon him the form of a servant; became obedient to that law which we had dishonored; exhausted the penalty which we had incurred; and, after a life of holy beneficence and suffering, died for our sins, rose again, and now reigns on high, gives eternal life to all who believe and honor him, and is the Judge of all. This Saviour possesses the attributes of the Godhead, and is to be honored even as the Father. He possesses also our nature. By it he became capable of death. From it, quickened by the Divinity, proceed mysterious influences to his Church. With it he pleads before the Father. To it all his people are to be conformed, and in it he will rule for ever; dispensing the terrors of his judgment, and the treasures of his love.

The bearing of these facts on the subject of our enquiry will presently appear. They are stated thus broadly at the outset, that they may guide and tinge the thoughts of both writer and readers. It is the history of the God-man we are about to investigate and describe.

SECT. 3. THE FULLNESS OF TIME.

The design of Christ's coming.

18. It may be gathered from what has already been advanced, that the design of the coming of Christ was most noble. Man had fallen. Placed under a righteous law, in a state of probation at once merciful and just, he had chosen sin and broken the law. He was therefore under its curse. Sin had brought fear, and fear had excited hostility, and hostility had fostered ignorance, and all combined had deepened his misery and aggravated his guilt, till God was entirely forgotten, and human life had become a scene of

mourning and woe." This ruin Christ came to restore, revealing God not as Judge only, but as Saviour; offering a full, free, and universal pardon, and imparting to as many as believe and obey his gospel, purity, holiness, and eternal life.

Delay of his coming.

19. This was his design. But a question arises. How comes it that this way of salvation was not earlier revealed; that thousands of years were suffered to pass away before he brought relief? Indirect indications were, indeed, given in Eden, that, though all was lost, all was not lost irrecoverably. But these intimations were mysterious, and were in effect confined to one nation.

Possible reasons.

20. To this question various replies may be given. Mercy, it may be said, is an act of sovereignty and of favor. Those, therefore, who have no claim for pardon, cannot justly ask why pardon was not earlier announced, or more profusely bestowed. Or it may be said that the delay was an act of One who is infinitely wise, and infinitely good; and that the question betrays a groundless suspicion of His goodness, or an equally groundless presumption of man's ability to comprehend His reasons. Or, it may be said, that God purposed to exhibit to the universe the evils of sin, and to impress upon the minds of all intelligent creatures the great lessons taught in human apostacy, and the fearful consequences of even one act of wilful rebellion. Scripture, however, has given us a more definite answer than any of these. It intimates clearly that before God could reveal himself or his truth in all its fullness, preparation must be made for the revelation; and that it was "in the FULLNESS OF TIME he sent forth his Son to redeem them that were under the Law, and that we might receive the adoption of sons."

The true reason.

21. This answer is susceptible of several illustrations.

Illustrations of "the fullness of time." Hopelessness of every other scheme proved by the delay.

(1.) It is one of the fundamental truths of the Gospel, that by the deeds of the law no man can be justified; and that if man be saved at all, it must be by the intervention of another. All his acts are sinful, even the holiest. They are defective either in themselves, or in the motives that prompt them; and even if it could be shown that any single act was perfect, its perfection could not cancel the guilt of other acts confessedly sinful. Added to this judicial difficulty is one no less serious. Man is degraded and fallen: never yet, apart from the Gospel, has human nature been renewed.

These truths, however, are among the last that men believe or admit: and needed to be proved by experiment, in order that a practical demonstration might be given of the necessity of redemption. This demonstration is one object of all history. From the beginning man had some divine light. The Gentile world had in addition the teaching of natural religion, while the Jews had superadded the teaching of a written revelation. For four thousand years men were left to these influences, that it might be known whether or no they would feel after God, if haply they might find him. The Gentiles, we know from history as well as from Scripture, did not like to retain God in their knowledge. The Jews, who had received a pure system, corrupted and abused it. And so far was man from showing any tendency to "regain self-raised his native seat," that every where his depravity became more intense; until, at the time of the advent of the Messiah, the world, and the civilized world especially, had reached a pre-eminence in wickedness which had never been surpassed.

This experiment, moreover, was made under every variety of circumstances. First, different forms of government were tried: Monarchy, Aristocracy, and Democracy. Authority was given successively into the hands of the one, of the many, and of the few; but all failed. To originate a form of government which, under favorable conditions, might raise a poor and industrious people to power and wealth, seemed easy enough; but the very attainment of these objects rendered their downfall inevitable. Wealth and power brought luxury and licentiousness, and these, ultimately, retribution and defeat. Every system of law, and every constitution of government, had, in fact, either in itself or in human nature, the seeds of decay. If vicious, it worked its own failure; if perfect, it led the sooner to greatness, which (as human nature is) is itself ruin. Unless, therefore, help arise from some other source, the condition of our race is desperate, and our moral redemption impossible.

Nor, during these political changes, were influences wanting of a more subtle order. The human mind had made great acquirements in philosophy and knowledge. From Pythagoras to Socrates (B. C. 600–400) questions of physical and moral truth had been incessantly discussed; and the wisdom of that age reached its perfection in the intellectual reign of the Sophists—a race who boasted of their ability to prove the same act either right or wrong, and the same proposition either false or true; thus subverting the very principles of virtue. Then Socrates appeared—one of the noblest lights of his age. He combatted the errors of his countrymen; proved, from the things that are made, the existence and attributes of God, and from his character the relations which he sustains to man. The life of the philosopher was the price he paid for his fidelity; and though his sentiments survived in Plato, they were employed by him as themes of philosophical speculation, and not of practical concern. Sublime and beautiful these speculations are, but, like the stars, they are too high above us to be of real use; and the tendency of his teaching was seen in the writings of his successor Aristotle, who possessed one of the clearest and strongest intellects, and yet contributed not a single offering to the cause of religion or morality. He found men under the bondage of sin. The passions that bound them he analyzed with matchless skill, but not one effort did he put forth for their relief.

A third fact remains. The æsthetic and the moral are closely allied. Does not, therefore, the cultivation of the taste lead to reformation? And to this question history has given a reply no less distinct. The age of Plato was the golden age of Grecian art. Sculpture, and poetry, and eloquence, had all framed their faultless models—and all ministered to vice. If the eye rested on any part of the streets of Athens, (the altar of Greece, as Pausanias afterwards called it,) it discovered every where the most finished specimens of sculpture; but each filled the imagination with all that was morally revolting. Taste presided over every department of life; but it was taste revelling in licentiousness. So that it became a common remark, that the days in which men worshipped their clay idols were less godless and immoral than those in which they bowed down to marble and gold.

Whether, therefore, if man had been left in his first apostacy, he would ever have recovered himself from that condition, is a question settled by the experience of four thousand years; and settled in terms so decisive, as to prove our need of the Gospel, and to supply important evidence of its truth.

The Gospel a spiritual system, and adapted to an advanced state.

22. (2.) While man's moral helplessness was receiving these painful illustrations, there might have been traced preparations for the coming of Christ of a more positive kind.

If, for example, we examine the Christian dispensation, and compare the form in which it is revealed with the form in which truth is revealed under the Law, it will be seen that the conceptions of the former belong essentially to an advanced stage of civilization. Adapted in its FACTS to every age, and in its precepts and teaching too, it nevertheless addresses itself, in a very large extent, to the spiritual nature of man. It has to do with thought, feeling, sentiment, and motive—in a word, with truth subjectively considered; while earlier revelations have to do chiefly with objective truth, and with objective truth in simple and material forms. The history both of nations and languages proves that, in the earlier periods of our race, the conceptions of man are mainly from without. So that the ideas of the Gospel as embodied, for example, in the Epistles, could hardly have been comprehended till man had passed the first stage of his progress, and had become intellectually somewhat refined. In our own day, an African can understand its facts. Its elevating tendency is moreover so strong, as rapidly to prepare him for admiring its simplicity and nobleness. But even under such teaching, generations may pass before the Gospel, as a *spiritual* revelation, is *adequately* appreciated; nor can even the best instructed among ourselves affirm that he has fathomed its depths. To have tempered these qualities of the Gospel with an admixture of earthliness would have marred its beauty; and to have revealed a Gospel equally spiritual in an earlier age, would have rendered necessary a much larger amount of evidence to authenticate it, while a continued miracle must have been required to preserve parts of it to the world.

Needs a language eminently spiritual. Its evidence requires some knowledge of natural laws.

23. (3.) The Gospel, moreover, is revealed in human language, and attested by miracle. But the language of a barbarous age would have been unequal to the task of embodying and transmitting its truths, and the state of knowledge in such an age would have rendered miracles impossible. Unless the laws of nature are to some extent known, men

cannot determine when in particular cases they are departed from or not. Savages are governed by imagination rather than by reason, and court deception by their credulity. The testimony of savage nations, therefore, in relation to the marvelous, is always received with suspicion. A revelation like the Gospel, with disclosures so stupendous, and sustained by facts so unusual, could hardly have been transmitted to Europe from New Zealand, for example, in a form to gain or deserve credence. There are in that country no words capable of conveying truth, and having at the same time a critical apparatus sufficient to guide future ages in discovering their meaning; nor is there THERE the intellect requisite to appreciate and prove the facts by which truth is sustained.

It illustrates these remarks, and proves the superintendence of the Providence of God, to notice that, although when Christ appeared the Greeks had sunk morally into the lowest state of degradation, they had been cultivating for ages, and with the greatest success, a language which has long been the admiration of the human race. It combines the opposite qualities of strength and flexibility; is equally adapted for the expression of logical distinctions, and of tenderest sentiment; and we doubt whether it appears to most advantage in the "terrible vehemence" of Demosthenes, the lyric softness of Anacreon, the high imaginative philosophy of Plato, or the exactness of Aristotle. It certainly adorns and illustrates them all. As a consequence of this perfection, partly as its cause, the language has attracted to itself whatever is most delightful in literature and profound in philosophy. A large apparatus is ever therefore ready to aid all who wish to explore its treasures. The study of it has ever revived with the revival of letters. It may be added that those remains which have come down to us are especially rich in the expressions of spiritual truth, and in terms which are adapted to illustrate the Bible, so that, though the doctrines of the Gospel are new and Divine, hardly a term required to be modified in order to adapt this language to the purpose of expressing them; and for such slight modifications the Jews and Hellenists were already prepared by the influence of the Septuagint, and the connection of Alexandria with Judæa and Europe.

As a universal system, it needed to be revealed at a time favorable to its claims.

24. (4.) The language which thus became adapted from its richness to express religious truth, was no less adapted to transmit it in consequence of its universality. When the Greek tongue attained in the writings of Plato and Aristotle its highest perfection, the hero appeared who was to give it its widest influence. Alexander, after subduing Greece and the eastern districts of Europe, extended his conquests eastward, and in a few years all Asia to the borders of India became tributary. Throughout all these regions the authority of the Greeks was established, and their literature introduced. Greek soon became the language of rank, of intelligence, and even of commerce. The conquest of Greece by Rome only extended its influence. The language and philosophy of Athens became in Italy the theme of almost idolatrous admiration. The victories and universal empire of the imperial city carried the Greek tongue to all the countries washed by the Mediterranean; and in the time of Christ whatever was written in Greek became accessible to all who, by their religion, (as the Jews) or their intelligence, (as the Greeks) or their power (as the Romans,) gave character to their age, or conferred distinction on their nation.

Summary

25. These successive changes, involving a slow and gradual development of the Divine purpose, seem essential to the establishment of a religion which was intended from the first to become universal, and

whose evidence and doctrines were to be examined and believed by the whole human race. It ill becomes *us* at least to question either the wisdom or the goodness of this delay; for it has secured to us ample historical confirmation of the most humbling of the truths of revelation, the completeness, namely, of our ruin; while it supplies a fullness of evidence, a beauty and explicitness of language, which on any other supposed arrangement would have been impossible for us to attain. If previous dispensations have suffered, it is for "our consolation and salvation." The very disadvantages of past ages, and the mystery of the Gospel in withholding its light, add to our privilege and responsibility.

If these reasonings seem strained, let it only be supposed that the great fact of the Gospel, the coming of Christ as our pattern and sacrifice, had been revealed with all the spiritual lessons it involves in the days of the Exode, and in even the Hebrew tongue. The solemn evidence of the complete ruin of the human race must then have been withheld. That the world by wisdom knew not God would have been a truth of revelation only, not of experience. Sophistry and licentiousness, which had corrupted natural religion, would have spent their force upon the revealed The language of Scripture, which, even with all the available helps supplied by Grecian and Hellenistic literature, has been perverted so as to subserve nearly every form of error, would have been incapable of definite exegesis; and, in a word, the religion intended to become universal must have been confessed to be unfit for its work, unless strengthened and sustained by a multiplication of miracles, as inconsistent with the economy of the Divine procedure as it would have been injurious to human faith.*

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* The latter views of this section are largely discussed and illustrated by Dr. Wayland, and in a recent work by Rev. W. J. Conybeare and Rev. J. S. Howson on the Life and Epistles of St. Paul.

SECT. 4.—THE STATE OF THE JEWS AT THE COMING OF THE MESSIAH.

Preparatory changes in Palestine.

26. While these preparatory changes were taking place in other parts of the world the Jews themselves were undergoing an important change. Their intercourse with the Gentiles, and the severe punishment which they had suffered in Babylon and in Judæa, checked their tendency to idolatry and confirmed them in their faith. Since the captivity the Scriptures were more frequently consulted, and synagogues were established in most of the larger cities of Palestine.

Diffusion of Judaism and its results.

27. This intercourse with strangers became also more extensive. In Egypt colonists early settled, and Alexander gave them privileges in his new city of Alexandria. A little later, they built a temple for themselves in that country, and thus weakened the ties that bound them to the Holy City. As the connection of the Jews with Egypt had at first been a scourge, so now it became a snare. From choice or necessity, settlers also established themselves in Asia Minor, Greece, and Italy; and, in the time of our Lord, there was scarcely a country in the whole Roman empire in which Jewish colonies might not be found. In almost every city Moses had those who preached him; (Acts xv. 21;) a fact that influenced on the one hand the national character, and on the other prepared the way more completely for the coming of the Messiah and the diffusion of his truth.

Prevailing formalism of the Jewish nation.

28. Other influences were at work of a directly religious kind. Most of the rites of the ancient law derived their importance from their symbolical character. They were doctrines and precepts in acts, as we have in the New Testament doctrines and precepts in words. Some of those rites were no doubt intended to preserve the Jews as a distinct nation; but

most teach lessons of morality and piety, or point attention to the work and office of the Messiah. Towards the close of that dispensation, however, all that was spiritual and significant in the law was forgotten; the ritual and formal alone was remembered, and dead corrupted truth became even more potent for evil than heathen error.

True religion corrupted.

29. As, therefore, we see among Pagans the effects of ignorance of true religion, so among the Jews we notice the direction the human mind takes when true religion decays. There were every where mere formalism and hypocrisy; but these qualities were modified by the different tendencies of men.

In Pharisaism.

30. (1.) There was the *traditional* tendency. Under its influence human elements were mingled with the Divine, and forms that compressed and destroyed the substance of piety were substituted for such as grew out of it. In the place of the real essence there came a dead ceremonial, much of which was of earthly origin; while what was heavenly became, in consequence of the place assigned to it in the prevalent system, corrupt and abominable. This was Pharisaism, or legal Judaism.

The disciples of this sect reflected most truly the national character, and were favorites with the people. Their traditions are noticed in various parts of the Gospels.* Some of these traditions were harmless; others of them made void the law. It is, however, the spirit of this sect, and their estimate of religion, that our Lord condemns. Rigidly severe in avoiding transgressions of the ritual precepts, they were ready at any time for violations of the moral law, and able by casuistry to excuse them. They commended frequent fastings and "long prayers in the synagogues," but allowed hypocrisy and covetousness. Their motive was the praise of men; their righteousness, the observance of outward duty; their very humility, spiritual pride. They were, it need hardly be added, the bitterest enemies of our Lord; and it is more than once said in the Gospels, that there was less hope of their amendment, than of the amendment of the most impious and immoral. Such was their general character. In some few, religion was the expression of honest but misguided zeal.*

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* Matt. xv. 2; Mark vii. 9.

In Sadduceeism.

31. (2.) But extremes beget or strengthen one another. The foreign additions made to Scripture by one sect were disowned by others; and with the rejection of the additions came the rejection of much that was genuine and true. Hence arose Sadduceeism, *rationalistic* Judaism, or infidelity. This sect denied the authority of all tradition, and objected to all development even of such truths as were plainly implied in the Pentateuch itself; so that they often misunderstood the very books which they professed to receive. They denied also the doctrine of the resurrection and the immortality of the soul; deeming these doctrines not proved by the letter of the Mosaic record, and inconsistent with the disinterested obedience which man is required to give to God. Their denial of the existence of spirits and of angels is hardly explicable on any principle, except that when once the mind of man has yielded to skeptical feeling, its unbelief becomes even more credulous than a heathen's faith. The precepts of the law, in their least spiritual signification, were all they regarded. Without denying a Providence, they made God, as far as possible, an idle spectator of the affairs of the universe; and were led to embrace a system of Deism, which all but completely set aside the authority of revelation. Their doctrines were favorably received by the young men of Judea; and produced, as Josephus had remarked, dispositions in the highest degree cold and repulsive.

The Sadducees were mostly persons of wealth, who lived lives of easy enjoyment, without opening their minds to any higher aspirations. From their position they occupied some of the most important posts in the country. Caiaphas, who condemned our Lord, was a Sadducee;* and Josephus states, that the Herod who felt John's preaching so keenly belonged to this sect.† He thus furnishes an illustration of the power of conscience over infidelity—a system which his heart, rather than his reason, had believed.

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* Rom. x. 2, 3.

Among the Essenes.

32. (3.) Neither of these views, however, met the wants of men of warmer devotional feeling. The Pharisees believed too much, and the Saducees too little. Both failed, in the opinion of this third sect, to understand the import of the Divine word, which is not on the surface, but beneath, and must be reached by *allegorical* interpretations. Hence arose the Essenes, the representatives of the mystics and ascetics of the middle ages. They differed from the Pharisees in not relying on tradition, and in not strictly regarding the law; and from the Sadducees, in their self-denying habits and belief of a future state. They despised all outward forms of worship, neglected the plain literal meaning of Scripture, and sought only for what was mystical and concealed. They professed to have sought after a life abstracted from all earthly things, and devoted to the contemplation of God. (Col. ii. 16--19.) In their creed they were unqualified fatalists. Some parts of the Epistles of John are supposed to refer to their doctrines; but, as they had seceded from the body of the Jewish people before the coming of our Lord, they are not noticed by name in the narratives of his ministry.

The Galileans.

33. (4.) Closely allied to the Pharisees in their religious views, were the Galileans. They were distinguished from that sect chiefly by their *political* tenets; holding that all foreign domination, whether secu-

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* Acts iv. 6; v. 17.

† Mark vi. 20.

lar or religious, was unscriptural, and that God was the only King of the Jews. As our Lord came from Galilee, the Pharisees attempted to identify him with this sect.

The Herodians.

34. (5.) The Herodians were chiefly Sadducees in their religious tenets, but were a *political* rather than a religious sect. It was their principle to promote intimacy with the Roman power by flattery and unlimited submission; and, above all, by introducing into Judea the usages and customs of the Roman people. This union with idolatry, on the ground of worldly policy, was probably the leaven against which our Lord cautioned his disciples, as it involves hypocrisy. (Mark viii. 15.)

The Scribes.

35. (6.) The Scribes were not a religious sect, but a learned profession. It was their business to write copies of the Law, and to expound its meaning; and hence they are called "lawyers," and "doctors of the law." As religionists, they generally favored the Pharisees. All sects, however, had friends among them.

The Samaritans.

36. (7.) The Samaritans claimed an interest in the Mosaic covenant, but are distinguished by Christ himself from "the lost sheep of the house of Israel," and from their Gentile neighbors. Those of the time of Christ sprang from colonists, with whom the king of Assyria peopled Samaria, after the ten tribes were carried away. A captive priest was sent to teach them; and though they at first regarded God as a kind of tutelary deity, and much of their system was corrupt, yet they afterwards attempted to become united with the Jews, so as to form one church. This attempt did not succeed; but a considerable body of Jews, under one of their priests, settled in Samaria, and erected upon Mount Gerizim an independent temple (which remained till the days of John Hyrcanus, B. C. 109), and established what they deemed a

more orderly observance of the Mosaic law. They founded all their religious practices and faith upon the Pentateuch, and rejected the other inspired writings. This division had been overruled for good. The mutual enmity of the two parties had tended to make both the more zealous for the purity of their respective copies of the Law. The separation of the Samaritans kept them free from the pride and narrowness so prevalent among their neighbors. Of spurious descent themselves, and despised by the people around them, they had a juster appreciation of the comprehensive purpose of the Gospel, and regarded all nations as entitled to its blessings. They accordingly received one of the earliest intimations from our Lord that he was the Messiah, (John iv.) and were otherwise frequently noticed by him in the course of his ministry.

Proselytes.

37. (8.) Proselytes were, in the time of our Lord, a very numerous body. Some were proselytes of the gate only (as they were called); and had simply pledged themselves to renounce all idolatry, and to worship the true God. This class had all heard of the coming of Messiah, and had generally little sympathy with Jewish prejudice. Others were proselytes of righteousness. These took upon themselves all the obligations of the Mosaic Law, and joined in offering sacrifice in the outer court of the temple to the God of Israel. The Pharisees took great pains to make these proselytes, and were aided by the fading authority of the old religions, and the reverence in which the God of the Jews was held even by the heathen. As these teachers had no true idea of their religion, they could impart none. Their converts, therefore, only changed their superstition, hushed the accusations of conscience, and became two-fold more the children of hell than before. (Matt. xxiii. 15.) They were ever among the bitterest enemies of the Christian faith.

The tendencies represented by these sects universal.

38. Such were the Jews in the time of Christ; the people were divided between these sects, and misled by them all. And, strange as it may appear, such is human nature still. In all lands there are some who, with the Sadducees, deify reason, and others who compile and adore traditions. These sects still live. Sadduceeism is cold, sneering selfishness; Phariseeism, spiritual pride, or dead Scripture learning; the doctrine of the Essenes, sentimental mysticism and monkery; the leaven of the Galileans, unhallowed fanaticism; of the Herodians, unblushing worldliness: the very qualities which are found in our own day in all regions of the globe. It is an evidence of the divine origin of our faith, that, while it counteracts temporary forms of evil, it counteracts them on principles that are permanent, and that it so reveals their true character, as to help us in tracing them under their different disguises throughout all lands.

Influence of these tendencies on men,s views of Christ.

39. It was the result of these errors, that when Christ appeared, all parties misapprehended his mission. Without any just appreciation of spiritual truth, accustomed to interpret the precepts of Scripture rather according to the letter than according to the spirit, feeling deeply the degradation of their country as a mere tributary to Rome, and unmindful of the deeper degradation from which it sprung, they all thought of Christ as a temporal deliverer; expected what they most prized, and overlooked the predictions of their sacred Scriptures, which spoke of him in a way altogether inconsistent with the establishment of a temporal kingdom. That they should expect the Gentiles to be excluded from the benefits of the Messiah's reign, was equally natural. Jerusalem was still to be in their esteem the seat of empire; and if others were in any way to share in the blessing, it could only be, they thought, by submitting to their authority, and never as equals and friends. The same low,

earthly system of interpretation was applied to all parts of the new economy, including the atonement and the doctrine of eternal life; so that it became difficult for our Lord to clear away the incrustation with which the law had been covered, and to show them in their own Scripture the germs of the truth which he was commissioned to reveal. In every age Divine truth has been spiritually discerned; and the worst interpreter of it is a wordly and unbelieving mind.

Exceptions.

40. Those among the Jews, on the contrary, who felt their sinfulness, and were waiting for the consolation of Israel, knew not indeed all that was to be revealed, but they were prepared to appreciate all; and when the prophecies were interpreted according to their spiritual meaning, and the law according to its highest import, and the kingdom of God and eternal life according to the estimates which those men had formed of the value of personal holiness, they felt, that though in this teaching was much that was new, it was all consistent with whatever was noble and spiritual in the previous economy. To multitudes this Gospel was foolishness, a rock of stumbling and a stone of offence; to a few it was light, and joy, and peace; to those who were (σωζομενοι) being saved, it was life unto life; to them that were being lost, (ἀπολλυμενοι,) it was death unto death. 2 Cor. ii. 16.

CHAPTER III.

SCENES CONNECTED WITH CHRIST'S ENTRANCE UPON HIS PERSONAL MINISTRY.

§ 1. The mission of John and his testimony concerning Christ.

§ 2. The temptation, and John's second testimony

§ 3. The beginning of miracles.

§ 4. Christ's first public act

§ 5. Christ's first discourse.

§ 6. Christ's first journey.

§ 7. Christ rejected by his countrymen.

§ 8. Christ incarnate—a revelation of God, and a model of holiness.

§ 9. Christ incarnate—a Saviour through suffering.

SCENES CONNECTED WITH CHRIST'S ENTRANCE ON HIS PERSONAL MINISTRY. TIME ABOUT A YEAR AND A HALF.

Matthew.	Mark.	Luke.	John.	Place.	Ord. Nar.	Miracle.	Discourse	Parable.
iii. 1–12	i. 1–8	*iii. 1–18	—	The Desert.	The ministry of John the Baptist.			
*iii. 13–17	i. 9–11	iii. 21–3	—	Jordan.	Baptism of Christ. John's testimony.			
						Heaven opened.		
iv. 1–11	i. 12, 13	*iv. 1–13	—	Des. of Judea	The Temptation.			
						Fast of 40 days.		
—	—	—	i. 1–18		Preface to St. John's Gospel.			
—	—	—	i. 19–34	Bethabara.	John's second testimony.			
—	—	—	i. 35–51	Jordan.	Jesus gains disciples.			
						Sees Nathaniel under the fig-tree.		
—	—	—	ii. 1–12	Cana.		Marriage at Cana.		
—	—	—	ii. 13–25	Jerusalem.	Jesus drives traders from the Temple.			
						The people see his miracles.		
—	—	—	iii. 1–21	Jerusalem.			Discourse with Nicodemus.	
—	—	—	iii. 22–36	Ænon.	Jesus leaves Jerusalem. Last testimony of John.			
iv. 12	i. 14	*iv. 14	iv. 1–3		Jesus departs into Galilee.			
xiv. 3–5	vi. 17–20	*iii. 19, 20			John imprisoned.			
—	—	—	*iv. 4–42	Sychar.			Discourse with the Samaritan woman; tells her the history of her life.	
xiv. 17	i. 14, 15	*iv. 14, 15	iv. 43–5		Jesus teaches publicly in Galilee.			
	—	—	*iv. 46–54	Cana.		Heals the son of the nobleman.		
iv. 13–16	—	*iv. 16–31	—	Nazareth.	Jesus, at Nazareth, is rejected, miraculously passes through among them, and fixes his abode at Capernaum.			

* The verses marked thus * give generally the fuller account.

CHAPTER III.

SECT. 1.—THE MISSION OF JOHN AND HIS TESTIMONY CONCERNING CHRIST.

Christ's age when he entered upon his office.

1. EIGHTEEN years elapse between the events recorded of the childhood of Christ, and the commencement of his ministry. His office was to be a solemn and responsible one. It was connected, moreover, with ancient institutions, and required in the person who filled it ample evidence of sobriety and prudence. It was therefore when Christ "began to be about thirty years of age," that He entered upon his work. The interval He seems to have spent at Nazareth (Mark i. 9; Luke iv. 16.) At that age priests, under the law, were deemed qualified for the full duties of the priesthood. By that age the human nature of Christ may be supposed to have been perfectly developed, so as to be thoroughly prepared for the rich communications of the Spirit, which he was about to receive. Against one of his years, moreover, the charge of youthful enthusiasm, or of unripe purpose, must have fallen utterly powerless.

Reasons for its maturity.

Three-fold preparation required.

2. Even for one so completely matured, a threefold preparation was required; the *first*, external, such as was supplied by the preaching of John the Baptist; the *second*, Divine, imparted in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, for even the pure offspring of God needed for His work a special anointing; and the

third, inward and experimental, such as was supplied by the temptation in the wilderness.

Nature of John's ministry.

3. John's was purely a preparatory ministry. He came, as had been foretold, in the spirit and power of Elias; one of the earliest prophets under the ancient monarchy, and the boldest of the reformers of the ancient church. In his whole ministry, he represents the majesty of the law. He appears rough and severe. Separated from the world, and revealing to it the sternness of the judge, he recalls the attention of his countrymen to the Divine institutions; shows how, among all classes, those institutions had been broken, and exhorts to repentance. It illustrates how far the Jews as a nation had fallen, that repentance had its Divinely appointed symbol in baptism—an ordinance appropriate to the reception of converts, or at least to a consecration of something previously defiled. It was not so much, therefore, a restoration as a re-formation of character which he sought to produce; a re-formation, however, chiefly legal, for the Spirit was not given, and the reign of heaven was as yet only at hand.*

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* In this account of John's ministry it appears to us that the esteemed author is somewhat defective and one-sided. John can with no propriety be classed with the teachers or prophets of the legal dispensation, since he received a special mission, with a special institution to introduce the new. The Evangelists do not hesitate to declare his ministry "the beginning of the Gospel." Mark i. 1. Christ expressly affirms that "the law and the prophets were until John; since then the kingdom of God is preached." The arguments that would invalidate John's ministry as a part of the Gospel dispensation, especially those presented by our author, would also invalidate the whole ministry of onr Lord himself, and that of all the Apostles and the Seventy during his lifetime. For this reason they must be inconclusive. Our Lord and his Apostles received baptism from his hands; they preached the same things; they "made and baptized disciples" in the same manner, and at the same time; nor did John deem it necessary to cease from his work even after the manifestation of Christ in his baptism, but continued it still as the servant of his acknow-

A call to repentance with a view to pardon.

John's then was a baptism of repentance; and repentance was a preparation for the forgiveness of sins. (ἐις ἄφεσιν, Luke iii. 3.) The exhibition of the law could do little more than to give to man a *knowledge* of his sins, and a longing for the grace that was to remove them. The repentance, therefore, which he preached, though really a change in the deepest recesses of the mind (μετάνοια,) was chiefly negative, and needed something positive to complete it; even the influence of the Spirit which men were to receive through faith in Christ. It was thus his office to enforce and explain the law, and thereby to awaken the necessity which the Redeemer came to appease.

All ranks seem to have felt his appeals. The general determination was obvious. Each sect blamed the pretensions and corruptions of the rest. Men's minds were every where restless and excited concerning the fulfillment of the ancient predictions and the coming of a Messiah. No wonder, therefore, that all Judea and Jerusalem flocked to his baptism.*

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ledged Lord, as "the friend of the Bridegroom," rejoicing to do Him honor, even to the sacrifice of his liberty and life.. This "more than a prophet;" this "messenger;" this 'angel' of the new dispensation, (Luke vii. 27, 27,) is very improperly represented as 'chiefly the expounder and reformer of the old.' It is in fact overlooking his most peculiar and pre-eminent glory.

The comparison of our Lord in Matt. xi. 11, appears to be misunderstood by many, and by our author among the rest. "The least in the kingdom of God is," indeed "greater" than John the Baptist; in this sense—that his privileges as a child and heir of God are infinitely more precious than the highest official honor conferred on man. "Verily I say unto you, among them that are born of women there hath not arisen *a greater* than John the Baptist; notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." J. N. B.

* Luke says that the crowds (ὄχλοι) went to it. Matthew mentions particularly Pharisees and Sadducees, thus indicating the prevalence of those sects. Luke iii. 7; Matt. iii. 7.

Announces the kingdom of heaven.

Titles and

gradual development of this kingdom.

4. Like all the prophets, he made the theme of his preaching, not himself, but One that was to come. He, however, enforced his appeals by the assurance that the kingdom of heaven, or, as St. Luke calls it, "the kingdom of God," was nigh. Sometimes, but rarely, that kingdom was afterwards called, "the kingdom of the Son of man" (Matt. xiii. 41); sometimes, with reference to the typical character of the old economy, "the kingdom of David." (Mark xi. 10.) And all those phrases are significant, though it was many years before their meaning was fully explained. Christ gradually unfolded the laws of His kingdom. First, He described the character of His subjects. Then distinctly announced that His kingdom came not with outward show, or worldly pomp, but was within; that it began as the smallest seed, and grew up with the growth of his word; then further, that it did not seek the aid of temporal power. (Matt. v. vi. xiii.; Luke xvii. 10; John xviii. 36.) His meaning was still further unfolded in the history of the early church; and the Apostles completed the disclosure by reminding their converts that that kingdom was not meat and drink, (no mere ritual observance, no mere earthly blessing,) but, in relation to individuals, "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost;" and in relation to the church, the prevalence of those principles among men. (Rom xiv. 17.) In reference to this kingdom, John was the forerunner, the voice (φωνή) crying in the wilderness, (Matt. iii. 3): THE WORD, (ὁ λόγος, John i. 1,) the distinct utterance of infinite wisdom and love, being as yet to come.

Christ a King.

Nature of His kingdom.

5. This revelation of the kingly character of Christ, even at the outset, is highly instructive. He appeared to bring back the world to its allegiance —to knit together again the broken relation in which the creature had stood to the Creator

and to himself. His constituted representative in the theocracy, David, probably suggested the name—"the *kingdom* or *reign* of God," (Ps. lxxii., xcvii,) though this title is not found in any ancient writings till after the canon of the Old Testament had closed. The idea, however, pervades Scripture, and is frequently introduced in the prophets.[*] Daniel even describes in express terms the expected sanctification of all things, and the coming of a Messiah, whom all nations were to obey.[†] This kingdom of God, or of the Messiah, or of righteousness, is opposed to the reign of sin,[‡] and of its representative, the ruler or prince of this world. Under the one, iniquity has long triumphed in the hearts of men and on earth: under the other, the dominion of iniquity is to be overthrown, and the dominion of holiness to be re-established; first in the secret recesses of each Christian's life, then in things external to it, afterwards, and by degrees, among the family of man. All things are to be ultimately subject to Christ and holiness, both things external and internal; but mainly and first the internal; and *thence* is his influence to extend throughout the world.[§]

This explanation of the nature of Christ's kingdom is of the deepest interest, and is essential to a complete understanding of the discourses of our Lord. The Jews thought of it as external only, and as thoroughly Jewish and secular. Others, on the contrary, (and among them the Gnostics,) denied its future external manifestation, and spoke of it only as invisible and spiritual. The true theory is that which represents it as not of the world, but still in the world; beginning in individual hearts, extending outward to the sanctification of the life, and ultimately reaching and influencing the whole race. Of this kingdom Christ is the head ; its seat is the heart and the church. In the narrowest sense it comes whenever a human soul is made submissive and obedient to Christ. It came in power at Pentecost, when thousands were converted to the faith ; and in its largest sense it is still to come. It had its type in the Jewish theocracy, and it will have its complete realization in heaven.

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[*] Isa. ii. 1—14; xi. 1, &c.; Ps. lxxxv. 11, 12; Jer. xxiii. 5, 9; xxxiv. 23, &c.

[†] Dan. ii. 44; vii. 14, 27; ix. 25.

[‡] *βασιλέια τῆς ἁμαρτίας—ἄρχων τοῦ κόσμου τόυτου.*

[§] See Appendix.

Obedience of Christ to appointed institutions.

6. As became the head of this spiritual kingdom, He entered upon His ministry by an act of obedience. In his childhood he received the sign of the covenant, and submitted to the ceremonial purification required by the law. In later years He took part in the sacrificial offerings of the temple worship. So now He is anxious to obey the Divine will, not only as revealed by the *founder* of the ancient institutions, but as revealed by the *herald* of the New Dispensation. He fulfilled all righteousness. "He came to John to be baptized of him." Matt. iii. 13, 17.

John's first testimony.

John felt that this application was, in one respect, unbecoming ; and yet, as he was only the representative of a Divine institute, he at once yielded to Christ's decision ; thus avoiding the mock humility (but real pride) which a pertinacious refusal of it would have involved, and honoring by his submission the authority of Divine law.

The time of obedience the time of recognition by the Father.

7. The moment of obedience was selected by God as the moment of the manifestation of Christ as the Messianic King, of course, as the accepted Prophet. The baptism of water became the symbol and accompaniment of the promised influence of the Spirit. Christ now attained, as man, the height of that knowledge which had gradually developed itself in Him ; and now was imparted that fullness of power which was

essential to the performance of His ministry. Here, therefore, the character of (the χριστός,) the Anointed One, first appears; and here He is solemnly consecrated to his office in His own presence, and in that of his forerunner and prophet John; for as he came up out of the water, the Spirit of God in bodily shape (visible both to Christ and to His messenger) descended as a dove and abode upon Him; and a voice was heard from heaven, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Successive recognitions at His birth, baptism, transfiguration, and resurrection.

8. At His birth his person was owned (Luke i. 35); in His baptism His ministry is owned, and the Father is pleased in Him; by and bye He will, for the third time, be owned again, when His regal glory shines for a moment around him; and then there will be the addition, "hear ye Him." (Luke ix. 36). Later still these attestations will all be confirmed; not by words only, but by solemn acts, and the resurrection will at length declare him to be the Son of God with power. (Rom. i. 4). Each is fitting in its season. At His birth, His baptism, His transfiguration, and His resurrection, His sonship is attested. His person, His ministry, and His dominion, all are owned. At each stage the full pleasure of God rests upon Him; and at last the full subjection of the earth is demanded for Him. God is "well pleased in Him," and the church and the world are to "hear Him."

Sect. 2.—The Temptation, and John's Second Testimony concerning Christ.

After the recognition of our Lord comes the temptation: both preparatory to his work.

9. This recognition of the public ministry of Christ is followed by a far different scene. His transfiguration immediately preceded His death; and the recognition of Him here is speedily followed by the temptation in the wilderness. After great honor, let Christians count upon

something that is humbling. The favored Christian needs to double his guard.

How Christ could be tempted.

10. Christ was led up by the Spirit to be tempted of the devil in the wilderness. He was in himself sinless, but human; both free from actual transgression, and positively holy; yet the moral elements of our nature were in Him. He had the power of choosing between good and evil, with a human conscience and human appetites. He was accessible to unholy influences; and not raised (in one sense at least, that is, subjectively, or in his own feeling) above the possibility of sinning. In the end, His desire of good was perfect and triumphant; yet it must be supposed that, as He was made perfect through sufferings, (Heb. ii. 10,) so was there a lower stage of progress, in which His will was rather the free power of choice than actual decision.*

In another sense, indeed, it was impossible that Christ could sin. His sinlessness forms part of the plan of human salvation; a plan that had been in preparation for thousands of years, and which was destined to influence our race for an eternity to come. Millions probably of the ancient church were waiting till his triumph was achieved; failure would have involved their ruin and the frustration of the purpose of God. It is true also that a divine principle lived and operated in Christ in union with His human nature, and that the Spirit, given without measure unto Him, secured him against the commission of iniquity. But then, in considering these facts in connection with His temptation, it must be remembered, on the other hand, that a *perfect* obedience was required at His hands. He was to be without sin; the pure and spotless Lamb of God, who needed not to bring an offering for Himself. As the founder of a kingdom of perfect righteousness and love, He was to be to all a lawgiver, a pattern, and a judge; the very image of the invisible God. A single stain would have marred his work, and have exposed him to the Divine law. It is certain, moreover, that whatever was the Divine purpose, and whatever the efficacy of the spiritual influence that resided in Him, these did not alleviate His temptations, or make it less true that He was tempted on all points as we are, though without sin; and that thus He has become qualified to aid, and to feel for his tempted disciples. (Heb. iv. 15; ii. 18.) It was as man that he entered upon this struggle—yet as man with a holy nature; for the temptations all sprang from without, deriving neither origin nor strength from anything within. (John xiv. 30.)

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* Our author appears here inconsistent with facts and with himself. "Actual decision" for rectitude, is essential to the lowest stage of moral progress, without which no being can be, as Christ was, "positively holy." It is, however, capable of infinite increase in intensity and power, and can be perfected only by trial and discipline. J. N. B.

Aspect of His temptation towards man.

And while this is the aspect of the temptation of Christ towards human sufferings, it has an aspect no less significant in relation to the reign which He came to establish. The very idea of a Messiah, a Prince, implies a kingdom of righteousness, and the overthrow of an opposing kingdom. Twice in the life of our Lord did he struggle with the combined force of evil, and twice He conquered it; now at the outset of His ministry, and afterwards at its close. Here the enticement is to the commendable desires and feelings of His nature, as afterwards it was to his fear of suffering and death. Both forms, doubtless, presented themselves again at different periods of His ministry; but here, at least, they came in a state of concentration, when he was exhausted by hunger; terrible in themselves, but giving in their results an assurance that the triumph of the great Conqueror would be ultimately complete. As man, therefore, he was

Aspect of it in relation to His kingdom.

tempted, but no less as Leader and King. The same act that insures to us His sympathy, insures to us the certainty of our own success. He suffers with us, and we triumph in Him.*

The first temptation.

11. The first temptation is a skillful appeal to unbelief, to the gratification of sensual instinct, and to the exercise by our Lord of supernatural power for the purpose of appeasing His necessities. The Tempter suggests a doubt of His sonship, pleads in proof His poverty and suffering, and bids Him put forth His power for His own preservation. Christ refused. Compliance would have questioned the truth of the voice from heaven, and implied distrust of God's power and goodness. It would, moreover, have exercised on Himself those wondrous powers which throughout His whole ministry he employed only for the benefit of others.

The second temptation.

12. But extremes are closely allied. This faith in the Divine power, may, perhaps be fostered into presumption; and this confidence of His sonship may be excited to display itself in the public and dazzling exhibition of attributes connected with this relation. (Matt. iv. 5, 6.) "Cast thyself down," said the Tempter again, and the people will acknowledge that thou art under Divine protection, Scripture will be fulfilled, and the Messenger of the Covenant will be seen to have "come suddenly to his temple." (Mal. iii. 1.) A scripture promise is even quoted in favor of this appeal; true in general, and true of Christ. By humble obedience, however, and by complete freedom from the least portion of self-will, He

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* This union of the possibility of sinning, and of the necessity of victory, is involved in the very nature of the God-man. It is very observable that in the last temptation, the Redeemer Himself declares His abandonment by the Father. (Matt. xxvii. 46.) That isolation in which the humanity of Christ stands alone, gives a true picture of the terrible struggle of that hour. Nothing is related of a similar abandonment in this place.

resists these appeals, and conquers. Such an act must have implied the need of some further confirmation of the Divine promise—have required special interposition for delivery from difficulties to which our Lord was not called; and have been, in short, a perversion of Scripture, and a tempting of God.

The third temptation.

13. Thus far was our Lord tempted by things apparently innocent. At last He is tempted by things desirable. The devil even appears as the friend of His mission. "It is a kingdom thou hast come to establish. Be my vicegerent; or, if thou wilt, reign in my stead. The world and all its kingdoms will I give to thee, for it has been delivered unto me;* and the only return I require, is an act of homage to my authority, and of allegiance to my law." To a human ear there seems much force in this appeal, and a human mind might have deemed it an easy way of attaining a commendable end. Every thing, moreover, is acknowledged to be *delivered* into Satan's hand. Rightful independent authority he disowns. But Christ at once detects his sophistry. One truth of Scripture answers it all. "There is but one true and everlasting God; and Him only shalt thou serve." The assumption of Divine prerogative is sure evidence of diabolical interference. (2 Thess. ii. 4.) This temptation therefore revealed the true character of the Tempter; and Christ at once rebuked and defeated him. The temptation then closed, and the devil left him for a season. (Luke iv. 13.)

His temptations a type of ours.

14. Every thing here is significant. The first man stood in Eden, where the garden and its fruits, with the willing service of ten thousand tributary creatures, bound him to his allegiance. But Jesus was in the wilderness, an hungered, and with the

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* Neander, in his Life of Jesus, thinks this offer of Satan implies *the use of secular power to establish Christianity*—an idea of vast significance. How many this temptation deceives! J. N. B.

savage beasts. (Mark i. 12, 13.) All things probably pleaded with the Tempter against God. In the garden paradise was lost, and in the wilderness it was regained. The temptations in which this first victory was achieved represent our own. They were of every kind (πάντα πειρασμόν). They appealed to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. They sought for distrust, and presumption, and pride. As the fall gives in brief the history of all sin, so the history of all our victories over sin may be seen in this triumph of our Lord. At its close angels visit Him, to celebrate the result and administer relief.

With the same Spirit there are diversities of gift. Full of the Holy Ghost, (Luke iv. 1,) He withstood and conquered the devil. Full of the same spirit, (ver. 14,) He meets sinners to heal and to save them.

Second testimony of John.

15. But before Christ commenced his public ministry, He received fresh testimony from His forerunner. The first meeting with John had impressed itself indelibly on the mind of the forerunner. He had then spoken of His dignity, (John i. 20,) and now he reveals him under a new character. "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world:" the Lamb who is to remove human transgression, both in its guilt and in its power. All that this designation contains we cannot now consider; but to the Jews, and to men who were probably at this time on their way to the feast of the Passover, it is highly instructive. The paschal lamb was originally appointed as the means of deliverance from otherwise inevitable destruction. It arrested the progress of the destroying angel. (Ex. xii. 1–14.) All upon whose houses the blood was sprinkled were preserved alive; while all who were without this symbol perished. Christ, as the Lamb of God, is our deliverer from a bondage more fearful

than that of Egypt; and from a ruin more awful than temporal destruction. His death stands always as a complete vindication of the law, and an authentic instrument of sanctification and of acceptance for all to whom His blood is applied. The full significance of this truth will be noticed hereafter. In the mean time it is important to notice that His sacrificial office was revealed as early as His kingly; and that from the first He was set forth, not only as suffering, and in suffering leaving us an example that we should follow His steps, but as Himself bearing our sins in His own body on the tree. Most appropriately, therefore, did this testimony close with the recommendation, "Behold the Lamb of God;" and most appropriately did two of John's disciples, on hearing this recommendation, go and follow Jesus. Half a century afterwards this fact was recorded by St. John, who was one of the two. The circumstances were all present to him. The minutest details and the very hour he remembered (John i. 39). But with characteristic modesty he has said nothing of those early discourses of Christ, which bound him, the beloved disciple, to his Lord as long as he lived. Here, as elsewhere, every thing personal (unless Christ's character is to be illustrated) is withheld; and all that is told us is, that henceforth Christ began to number disciples. For some years they were few and despised, nor did they at first relinquish their earthly vocation. Their summons to personal companionship with our Lord was given at a somewhat later period of His history. (Matt. iv. 18.)

The result: Jesus numbers disciples.

Diffusive spirit of true discipleship.

16. The faith awakened in the minds of the first disciples immediately became manifest. Like fire, it extended itself, and kindled every thing susceptible of its influence. Andrew mentioned the fact of his having found the Messiah to Peter; and

Philip, whom Christ had also called, proclaimed it to Nathanael or Bartholomew. He questioned the truth of Philip's declaration, and alluded to the contempt generally entertained for Galilee, of which province Nazareth was an unimportant town, in no good repute, moreover, for morality. Philip repeats his message, wisely avoiding a useless discussion ; and a personal interview with Christ removes the scruples of this candid inquirer. "Rabbi," says he, "thou art the Son of God ; thou art the King of Israel." Christ had hitherto but told Nathanael what took place when he thought himself unseen by human eye ; and the disclosure produced conviction (John i. 48–50). Christ now tells him that he shall learn more sublime disclosures ; and that both things earthly, and things heavenly, should be seen as subservient to Him. "In me," says He, "heaven is opened ; union between the higher world of spirits and the lower sphere of things is restored ; and, for a time at least, the angelic hosts are in effect transferred to the earth to do my will, and to promote the interest of my kingdom. The head of the kingdom being among men, angels shall be seen ascending and descending* under the authority, and in relation to the concerns of the Son of man."

Obedience prepares for further disclosures.

SECT. 3.—THE BEGINNING OF SIGNS.

The miracle at Cana.

17. From Jordan, where the scene of our narrative has lain thus far, Christ moves to Cana, the town of Nathanael, accompanied by His disciples and relatives. Here He performed His first public miracle. Already had He manifested His omniscience, and already had the miraculous descent of the Holy Ghost attested to John and Himself the divinity of His mission ; but this is

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* ἀναβαίνοντες comes first, it will be noticed.

the first *public* appeal, and here he first shows forth His glory, proving that the fullness of the Deity dwelt in Him.[†]

The relation of Mary to Christ.

18. Here, moreover, the mother of our Lord is first introduced in connection with His public ministry; and the terms in which He addresses her arrest our thoughts. Let us, once for all, ascertain and decide her place in the Gospel.

It is observable, *first*, that of the Virgin Mary very little is recorded; and *then*, that *that* little is very different from what might have been expected. None of the inspired writers, except the Evangelists, mention her name, and of these, but two record the conception of Christ. One of these, John, her adopted son, though, in all likelihood, he outlived her many years, does not record her death; nor does he give any particulars of her life; and yet he wrote to supply the omissions of the other Evangelists. It is only incidentally mentioned that Jesus committed her to his care. Why this infrequent mention of her, whom all generations were to call blessed? Why, but to guard against that superstitious veneration, to which, as experience has shown, there is naturally so strong a tendency in the minds of Christians? Mariolatry is, alas, the religion of Italy and of Rome. For one prayer to Christ, Roman breviaries offer ten to the Virgin. How different the religion of Apostles and of the Bible! And when her name is introduced, it is in such connections as form a strong confirmation of this view. When, after our Lord had entered upon His public ministry, His mother and kindred were announced as desirous of speaking with Him, He turned to His disciples, and said, "Behold my mother and my brethren." (Matt. xii. 40.) When, again, the woman exclaimed, "Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked," "Yea, rather blessed," replied He, "are they that hear the word of God and keep it." (Luke xi. 27.) Her maternal relation, as such, therefore, implied a blessedness inferior to that of the humblest of His hearers. In the narrative of this chapter, His mother is invited as well as His disciples; and seems to have been apprized of His design to perform some miracle, or perhaps merely remembered the memorable scenes of His youth; at all events, she applied to Him when the wine was deficient, and, though his answer (γυνη) is free from the roughness which the English version implies, He plainly forbids her interference, and intimates that His filial reverence, which as man He expressed on the cross, did not extend to any question connected with His ministry. The idea of the Virgin's intercession with her Son, or with God, therefore, He himself condemns. "There is *one* mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus." (1 Tim. ii. 5) Between Him and man none is needed, and none is given. Of all who come unto *Him*, not one shall be cast out. (John vi. 37.)

[†] *φανέρωσις δόξης*; Manifesting the Divine power—the Shekinah which dwelt in him.

The miracle and its two-fold meaning.

19. Let us now peruse the narrative of this miracle, and mark its significance. The disciples of our Lord had all been disciples of John. Rigidness and penitential austerity were the characteristics of His life. He came neither eating nor drinking. Christ came as the model of our race, and begins his work by an expression of genial and kindly feeling; honoring with His presence an institution of primeval authority, symbolical, moreover, of His own union with His church.

Nor was the act without even a deeper meaning. He came to fulfill the ancient institution. He was grace and truth, as opposed not only to the errors of the heathen, but as opposed to the shadows of the Jewish law. And this object of His coming, this characteristic of the whole Gospel, His first miracle was intended to express. All His miracles were indeed symbols. They were acted parables—conveying relief to the suffering—giving evidence of His mission, and at the same time exhibiting spiritual truth; so that we claim nothing for this miracle which may not be found equally in them all. The miracle consisted in substituting wine for the water which had been put into vessels used in Jewish purification. Water, under the Law, was symbolical; denoting the means of inward purity, that is, of justification and holiness: its antitype or substance, the sacrifice of Christ and the influence of the Spirit. Other vessels might have been chosen, and the presence of the water was not essential to the performance of the miracle; but the miracle would in that case have been robbed of its significance. The vessels are filled and the water changed, to suggest that for the carnal washings of the law, we are to have His blood; and that He came not to destroy that ancient economy, but to fulfill and complete it. The Jews, indeed, in their interpretation of that dispensation, rejected the idea of typical incompleteness, and then, as now, maintained that when Messiah should come, he would not alter or abolish their law. The good wine they believed to have been given at the commencement of the feast, and not to have been left to the close. The principle of the Divine procedure is the contrary; and the reservation of the more glorious dispensation of God's will till the time of Christ's coming, was among the truths incidentally taught in the miracle.

Christ's first and last manifestations similar.

20. Nor ought we to omit noticing that Christ's first manifestation of Himself to His disciples, like His last, (before He suffered,) sanctified the fruit of the vine, and made it the emblem of His atoning sacrifice, the shedding of that blood without which there is no remission.

And now may we fitly introduce a few remarks on the miracles of our Lord, and on their place in the Gospels.

Miracles.

21. The success of Christianity is connected in Scripture, and by all early Christian writers, with the possession on the part of our Lord of miraculous power. Men believed His message because Divine works or miracles, facts, that is, which could not have taken place from natural causes, or without superhuman aid, attested its truth. To these works our Lord appealed as works which none other man did, and as a decisive evidence of the divinity of His mission. (Matt. xi. 2–6; John v. 36; x. 37, 38.) He healed the sick, He raised the dead; not once only, but in many hundreds of cases; for it is said repeatedly that they brought sick people unto Him, and He healed them all. (Matt. iv. 24; xii. 15; xiv. 14; xv. 30; Mark i. 34; iii. 10; Luke vi. 17; ix. 11.) He gave the same power to His disciples; first to the twelve, and then to the seventy. After His departure His apostles received the power of bestowing this miraculous gift on all upon whom they laid their hands; so that many hundreds were thus endowed. Hence the gift of healing is spoken of in Scripture as a thing familiarly known, and is reckoned among the signs of a Divinely appointed teacher. Indeed, in the absence of a New Testament, or of written records of the Divine will, miraculous power seems to have been a necessary evidence of a communication from God.

The sufficiency of the evidence which our Lord exhibited in this form, was admitted by all and maintained by Himself. (John iii. 2; vii. 31; ix. 30–33; xi. 47, 48; xv. 24; Acts ii. 22.)

Miracles called by different names: each significant.

22. These actions of our Lord are called in Scripture by different names; and each name is instructive. As they were manifestations of power, they are called mighty works; (δυνάμεις;) as adapted to prove the truth of His mission, and to strengthen the faith of His disciples, they are called signs; (σημεῖα;) as creating surprise, they are called wonders; (τέρατα;) while in

John they are called by a title of yet greater significance, simply "His works;" (John vii. 3; ix. 4; xv. 24;) the appropriate and natural acts, that is, of one who was himself the mighty God, and a wonder (τέρας) to the people.

Mighty works.

That they were justly called *mighty works*, is plain; for since the beginning of the world, as the man in the Gospel reasoned, hath it not been heard that a man opened the eyes of the blind; or, could a man do these works unless God were with him? (John iii. 2; x. 21.) They were embodiments of divine power.

Wonders.

That they were *wonders*, too, is clear, for the people were astonished at them. And indeed our Saviour had occasion, more than once, to rebuke the sensuous curiosity with which the crowds followed and watched him, not that they might receive instruction, but that they might see the miracles which He did. (John iv. 48.)

Signs.

In what sense and to what degree they were *signs*—evidences, that is, of His divine mission—is a more difficult question; and yet it may be readily solved.

The religion of the Bible, it must be remembered, is the only one founded on properly miraculous evidence. In Mahometanism there is not a single miracle belonging to the history of the false prophet alleged as evidence of his mission. The systems of heathenism submit no such credentials; and even in the case of John the Baptist, he wrought no miracles, because he made no addition to the previous economy. He sought to restore all things; to revive, as far as he might, the spirit of the Law, by preaching repentance to those who had broken it; and so to prepare for the coming of Christ. Christ came preaching faith in His own mission; and miracles were the appropriate evidence of His authority. It is not, therefore, as if we had to judge between various religious systems, all professing to be founded on miraculous evidence; for in this respect the Bible stands alone. The only question is, whether the evidence is credible and decisive. Peruse any of the narratives of these miraculous works, and let the reader ask himself the following questions: Were they done in public? Were they acts of which men's senses could judge? If they were, it is impossible that men could be deceived at the time. Then let him ask himself besides: Were public monuments kept up, and outward actions performed in memory of these events publicly performed; and have such monuments, set up at the time they were wrought, been continued without intermission? And, if so, it is equally impossible that deception should have been practised in any subsequent age.* We can but indicate the rules which are admitted to be infallible as tests of the reality of apparently miraculous appearances.

The only alternative open to the malicious suggestion of an opponent are—either Christ wilfully deceived the people, or was Himself deceived. He *deceived the people!* But how? He introduced his religion among enemies, who rejected and contemned Him, and who throughout narrowly watched (πἄρετήρουν) His proceedings, and sought occasion against Him. And why? He foresaw and foretold His own death. He promised His disciples persecution and suffering, He enforced and practised universal holiness. *He was himself deceived!* Whence, then, the sobriety and beauty of his precepts, the disheartening faithfulness of his warnings, the contrast between his teaching and the expectations of his countrymen? No one mark of either enthusiasm or imposture is to be found in Him.

If these miracles are denied, a greater miracle is admitted.

23. If, after all, we set aside the evidence supplied by these miracles, we must then suppose a miracle greater than all. If Christ was not from God, we have then a Jewish peasant changing

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* See Leslie's *Short and Easy Method with the Deists.*

the religion of the world; weaving, with the story of his life, the fulfillment of ancient predictions, and a morality of the purest order, as unlike the traditional teaching of his countrymen, as it was superior to the precepts of Gentile philosophy; anticipating and enduring, with most unearthly composure, intense suffering, and inducing his followers to submit to similar sufferings, and many of them to a cruel death, in support, not so much of opinions, as of alleged facts, beginning with the miracle of his birth, and ending with the miracle of his resurrection. We have, then, these followers, "unlearned men," going forth and discoursing upon the sublimest themes; persuading the occupiers of Grecian and Roman cities to cast away their idols, to renounce the religion of their fathers, to reject the instruction of their philosophy, and to receive instead, as a teacher sent from God, a Jew of humble station, who had nothing earthly to offer but persecution and poverty, and who had himself been put to a shameful death. To receive this explanation of the admitted facts, is to receive a greater miracle than any which the Bible contains.

The effect of these miracles.

24. The appropriate effect of these miracles on those who witnessed them, is told us in John vi. 14. "Then those men, on seeing the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world." And the appropriate effect of the record that contains them, is told us in John xx. 30, 31: "And many other signs did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name."

Difference between Old and New Testament miracles.

25. Very obvious are the distinctions between the miracles of the New Testament and those of the Old. The miracles of Moses are generally of an external kind only; wrought on nature and

the elements; adapted rather to lay hold on what may be called the lower powers of the soul, and of the imagination especially. In the miracles of the New Testament, we find a higher spiritual character. They were never performed for effect, never for the personal advantage of those who wrought them. They are all (with perhaps one exception) exhibitions of mercy, showing that physical nature is under God's control, as prophecy shows also that history is. They are all, moreover, didactic, teaching, in a most significant form, the great spiritual truths of the Gospel; and they often seem to enter in a remarkable way upon the peculiar province of God. Of this last kind is the cure of leprosy; a disease which was regarded as a sign of the displeasure of God; inflicted, and only to be removed by Him (2 Kings v. 7). So, too, when our Lord cast out devils, He showed His power, not so much over material nature, as over the author of evil himself.

The latter exhibitions of mercy and of spiritual power.

26. Between the miracles of our Lord and those of His disciples, may also be noted a marked distinction. *Theirs* were wrought in His name: *His* were wrought in His own. He had the power in Himself. In them, on the contrary, it seems to have been developed according to their faith. (Matt. x. 1–8; xvi. 19.) This power, it may be added, seems to have lasted for some time after the apostles had been withdrawn, until the foundation of the church was completely laid; and then (with the last generation on which their hands were laid) it gradually disappeared from the world.

Between the miracles of Christ, and those of His Apostles.

SECT. 4.—CHRIST'S FIRST PUBLIC ACT.

Christ drives the traders from the temple.

And again at the close of His ministry.

Both acts expressive of authority.

27. By way of Capernaum our Lord now pays his first public visit to Jerusalem at the feast of the Passover, and as his first public act, he proceeds to the temple. Here he found the traders changing the Roman denarius and Grecian drachma for the Jewish shekel, and all these for coins of a lower denomination. The first only were received by the Roman collectors, and the last only at the temple treasury. Here also were sold the victims used in the Jewish worship. All this business was transacted within the precincts of the temple (τὸ ἱερόν), and involved an unseemly union of things secular and sacred. The whole was conducted, moreover, in a spirit of grasping, godless gain, little less guilty than theft. Our Lord, therefore, took occasion to rebuke both evils, and at the same time to indicate one purpose of His coming. He appeared to purify the house of God, and to free it from earthly defilement. This object He symbolized both now at the commencement of His ministry, and afterwards at its close, by the act of purifying the court of the outer sanctuary. The boldness of His conduct is sufficiently clear, and seems to have excited the surprise of the Sanhedrim; for on both occasions they asked Him for His authority, and hinted that what was done, was defensible only on the supposition of His having a Divine commission. (John ii. 18; Mark xi. 28. The answer he gave them clearly implied that he was himself, in a very emphatic sense, the temple of God, with no common destiny;* and the announcement was afterwards employed, although in a perverted form, against Himself. (Matt. xxvi. 61.)

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* *ναός*, it will be noticed, is the word he uses, and not *ἱερον*.

Another significant act in relation to the temple.

28. Once more, between these two scenes, He intimated his connection with the temple in another form. When the Jewish officer demanded the payment of the temple tax, (half a shekel from each Jew,) He suggested that as the Son of God He was properly free (Matt. xvii. 27); though not unwilling on other grouuds to admit their claim.

An instance of our Lord's severity.

29. Most of the other acts of our Lord display the mildness of love—this displays its severity. As the first was shown to the modest and the humble, so was the second to the froward and shameless; sometimes by deeds, as here, but more generally only by strong and withering rebuke. See Matt. xxiv.; Luke xix. 27.

Sect 5.—Christ's First Discourse.

30. This act of our Lord could not fail to turn men's thoughts to Himself. He had come up from Galilee to Jerusalem as a Jew of humble rank, and with four or five followers, belonging, apparently, to the same class. His expulsion of the traders from the temple, and His miracles, excited much interest; and many began to regard him as a divine prophet; some, perhaps, as *the* prophet, though they had, no doubt, the most inaccurate notions of the design of the Messiah's mission, and of the nature of the kingdom which he was to establish.

Character and purpose of Nicodemus.

25. Among this number was Nicodemus, a member of the sect of the Pharisees, and a ruler of the Jews; a councillor, that is, or member of the Sanhedrim, the highest Jewish judicial court, and an expositor of the Jewish law. He probably, like the rest of his countrymen, looked for a temporal deliverer; but seems to have been a man of a candid and thoughtful mind. That he expected to find in Christ the promised Messiah, is not at all probable. He must have known that the Mes-

siah was to come, not from Nazareth, but from Bethlehem; nor can he be supposed to have sought for him in an obscure Galilean stranger, when he must have known that the Messiah, "the Prince," was to descend from the ancient royal house of David. He came, therefore, to have some private conversation with this stranger, respecting that kingdom of God which Jesus and John had both declared to be at hand; and as his interview might have been attended with inconvenience, if not with danger, should his colleagues happen to hear of it, he made it as private as possible, and therefore, came to Jesus by night. He introduced himself by acknowledging his conviction that Christ was a teacher come from God; and was about to announce the object of his visit, when Christ interrupted, and answered, (as he often did,) the thoughts of the inquirer. (See John vi. 26, 35, 64, 65; John viii. 7.)

Christ explains the nature of His kingdom, and the way in which men enter it.

31. Instead of showing Himself flattered by the recognition of His divine mission by a man of such rank and influence, He in effect states that His visitor was entirely mistaken on the subject about which he came to converse; and that, without a complete change, both of feeling and of thought, he could never see (that is, he could neither understand nor enter) the kingdom of which he doubtless deemed himself a member. "Except a man, Jew as well as Gentile, undergo a thorough and radical change—such a change as lays the foundation of a new life—he cannot see the kingdom of God." That such words might have been addressed to a Gentile heathen, Nicodemus would perhaps have allowed; but that they should be addressed to one who, as a Jew, was already a child of the kingdom, was to him quite incomprehensible—so much so, that the literal, rather than the figurative meaning of our Lord's words, seemed the more natural to him, though that meaning seemed scarcely possible. "How can a man be born," said he, "when he

is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb, and be born?"[*] Our Lord repeats His statement, and adds an explanation or two that might serve to make it more intelligible. "Verily, verily," says He, "except a man be born, not naturally and of blood, as you have supposed, but of water and of the Spirit—of a pure and spiritual influence—he cannot enter the kingdom of God. All the outgoings of flesh are flesh, human and sinful; that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. All that is holy, and fitted therefore for my kingdom, is, in its origin and nature, not fleshly and natural, but spiritual and divine. Nor is it an objection to this doctrine that men have no notion how this inward change is produced, or how it differs from the natural workings of the human mind. Under the old economy the Spirit breathed in inspiring the prophets as he pleased; why or how none can tell: men only heard 'his voice,' and received his communications. In nature, too, 'the wind bloweth where it listeth;' its power is acknowledged, though none can tell 'whence it cometh and whither it goeth.' So in my kingdom the reason and the manner of Divine operations are not known, but their results only. (John iii. 5–8.) 'Thus it is with every one that is born of the Spirit.' "[†]

This explanation completes the perplexity of the inquirer. How an internal spiritual change can be necessary for one who is already a Jew, is inconceivable. Therefore, says he, "How CAN these things be?" "The kingdom of heaven *is* ours. We are already its subjects, and only wait its appearance." Our Lord again replies that the truth ought to have been familiar to him as a reader of the ancient Scriptures—referring, probably, to passages in which God sets forth the necessity of an internal, spiritual change, and his intention to effect such a change in the days of the Messiah; (Ezekiel xxxvi. 25, 27; Jer. xxxi. 31, 33;) or perhaps intimating that the law itself ought to have awakened within him a conviction of his own need. "Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?" Again our Lord rebukes his ignorance, and asks how he can be prepared for further disclosures, if facts so immediately within his own cognizance be misunderstood or unknown. "If I have told you earthly things and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?" (v. 10–12.) "The doctrine I have taught you is within the domain of your own consciousness. It is part of ancient prophecy. It is the great lesson of the law. Spiritual subjects alone are fit for a spiritual kingdom; and if this truth, which can be verified on earth, be not understood, my revelation of heavenly things will be incredible and useless."

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[*] That this is the stress of the passage, is highly probable; *ὑμᾶς γεννηθῆναι ἄrωθεν* seems the emphasis.

[†] The fact that *πνεῦμα* is used in both verses of the original, makes the English translation rather forced. Both meanings, therefore, are embodied above.

Further explained.

32. The nature of this kingdom, however, he proceeds to explain in terms that convey the most important truths, and in a permanent form, though the whole is especially adapted to the views of a Pharisaic Jew, laboring under the mistaken notions common to his nation and sect. The question which Nicodemus had come to ask, had reference to the kingdom of the Messiah; and if his feelings had been uttered in words, he would probably have said, "The coming kingdom is at hand. Tell me when it will appear. Messiah is to be lifted up, and *exalted* to a glorious throne. The Jews are to be delivered from their degradation. Christ, the Son of the Father, is *their* ruler. The Gentiles are to be punished and destroyed, such only excepted as submit themselves willingly to the authority of the chosen race. All Jews will, of course, have their part in this kingdom; but tell me what is the

His kingdom spiritual, universal, and founded on faith.

time of its appearance, and what are the rules and requirements of its service?" The reply of our Lord is deeply significant. "Messiah," says He, "the Son of Man, who is at once in heaven and on earth, shall indeed be exalted, (ὑψώσεται,) but it will be as the serpent was lifted up in the wilderness. The design of this arrangement is not Israel's temporal deliverance, but *man's* spiritual and everlasting salvation; and the means of this salvation is not submission to Judaism, or any outward connection with the ancient economy, but a believing confidence in this message, and in the person and office of him who reveals it. 'For God so loved,' not Israel only, but 'the world, that he devoted to death (gave) his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.'" "And so decisive is this law, that all who do not believe, whether they be Jews or Gentiles, shall be excluded from the blessings of the kingdom of Christ, and be punished for the rejection of his message." Nor is that all. For, while the rejection of the message may condemn many, the willful neglect of it, the avoidance of the element of light, and the love of darkness will condemn more. 'And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.' (v. 14–21.) Here the discourse with Nicodemus ends.* The rest of the chapter is occupied with a further explanation of our Lord's office, and an additional testimony from His forerunner, John the Baptist. What effect was produced by the whole on the mind of Nicodemus is not told us; but that it did not fail to produce some impression, is quite clear from the latter chapters of this history. (vii. 50; xix. 39.)

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* Olshausen, Neander, and others, think that it ends with the 16th verse.

The great truths of the Gospel given in this discourse.

33. The great facts of this narrative are exceedingly significant. At the very outset of His ministry, our Saviour foretells His death, reveals His own character as "the only begotten Son of God," and as "the Son of Man;" unfolds the design of His mission, not to condemn even the guiltiest, but "that the world through Him may be saved;" sets forth the means of the accomplishment of this design—His exaltation on the cross, His sacrificial death, and the way in which an interest in the blessings He secured may be obtained—a living faith; traces the origin of this economy to the mercy and love of God, and warns men of the punishment to be inflicted on all who neglect His message. The condition of the world as perishing, the need of an inward, holy change on man's part, the adjustment of the claims of justice, with the exercise of mercy on God's; the mighty Agent by whose influence this inward change is wrought, and the cost of this adjustment, with the end of the whole dispensation, that all things may be given into the hands of the Son, are fully disclosed. (iii. 35.) The first scenes, therefore, of the public ministry of our Lord, shadow forth the truths which were embodied, with terrible reality, in the last.

Importance of the last verses of John iii.

34. Whether the last verses of this chapter were spoken by John the Baptist, or by John the Evangelist, is not clear; but in either case the lesson is instructive. If the former spoke them, then they form an attestation from the lips of the preacher of repentance, to the impotency of repentance without faith to secure salvation: and if the latter, they are as strong an attestation from the preacher of love to the reality of the Divine judgments. (v. 35, 36.) In the one case, it is the preacher of repentance, who bids men to believe; in the other, it is the preacher of love expatiating on the fearfulness of the wrath of God; and we may be sure it is in

substance the attestation of both; "He that believeth on the Son hath life, and he that believeth not on the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him."

The kingdom of God is not recognized without the Spirit.

35. The thing that startles most in this record, is perhaps the announcement that the kingdom of God is not SEEN without the teaching and regenerating influence of the Spirit. We know as a fact that much may be done in the exposition of Scripture, the volume of the mysteries of the kingdom, without any supernatural aid. A man may declaim with overwhelming energy upon the majestic truths of Providence and Grace, may rouse feelings both of tenderness and terror, and neither he nor his audience have known in any sense that shall influence their eventual salvation, one emotion of spiritual life. By thousands the Bible is studied as an exercise of the intellect. Reason is strengthened under it. Imagination is delighted with it. The gentler affections are even softened and ennobled by it. And yet there may be total inward death. The organ even that perceives its real import may be wanting in vital action; for it is *spiritually* discerned.

The Spirit reveals no new truth.

36. To complete this view, however, it must be added, that the change which the Spirit produces in human hearts, is a change, not of new faculties for old, but of new objects of affection only. It is no part of his work to bestow faculties—something which is neither hope, nor fear, nor love; he simply directs those affections to more exalted ends. His whole design is manifestly not to annihilate human feelings; but to direct and govern them upon better principles, and under holy guidance. The change is in the object revealed, and in the corresponding attraction of the heart towards it. The man, who becomes in Christ Jesus a new creature, is not gifted with other eyes; he only sees what other eyes cannot or will not see, and loves what other hearts will

not love. In mind and heart he is the same man; only with all his heart and with all his mind he serves Christ. Every thought remains, and his faculty of thought; but are all brought into captivity to the obedience of faith. In motive, in character, in aim, in the objects of his love, but in these, and such as these only, "old things are past away, and behold all things are become new." (2 Cor. v. 17.)

All true progress of the kingdom is in individual conversions.

37. It is only therefore where this change is undergone, that the kingdom of God is begun, and it is from the seat of this inward change that this kingdom spreads—first through the whole man, and then through our race. Christ's kingdom is not founded on our outward condition, or on the circumstances of our life; its place is in the soul. Sincere repentance and deep personal faith are its prerequisites; and they supply the exact measure of all amelioration, private and social; truths self-evident, and yet constantly overlooked. Each vice and grievance, the whole mass of evil which afflicts society, is apt to be charged upon faulty institutional arrangements, upon laws, or want of laws; and can be removed (it is thought) only by external appliances. *The world* (it is held) must be mended before its inhabitants can be better. Men, therefore, attempt to get the reign of righteousness established first; and then, it is supposed, individual moral renovation will begin. "Set up the kingdom, and citizens will enter and be enrolled." But the Scripture scheme reverses this order. It teaches that new systems of society cannot perfect individuals, but that individuals must first find in themselves the germs of nobler systems; and that those germs have their origin, not in considerations of selfishness, nor in the gratification of any thing purely human, but in the awakening of a life that is divine. "Except a man be *born anew*, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

SECT. 6.—CHRIST'S FIRST JOURNEY.

38. The attention which Christ's ministry had now excited induced Him to leave Judæa, where his disciples had already baptized several converts (John iii. 22; iv. 1), and He resolved to revisit Galilee. On his way He went through Samaria; thus intimating at the outset that, though his labors were to begin at Jerusalem, they were not to end there. After traveling between twenty and thirty miles, He reached at mid-day the ancient city of Sychar, and being wearied with His journey, sat and rested himself near the well, which, seventeen hundred years before, Jacob had purchased of the people of the country. In the mean time His disciples went into the city "to buy bread." While they were gone, a poor woman of loose character visited the place to draw water. As was His custom, Christ availed himself of the opportunity, and conversed with her, telling her of the "living water" which He was able to supply. She thought only of a running spring; and as Christ found it impossible to get her to understand His meaning, He pointedly reminds her of her guilt, and discovers to her His knowledge of her true condition. She in return acknowledged Him to be a prophet, and immediately consults Him on the great controversy between the Samaritans and the Jews; chiefly, however, to avoid continued attention to herself. That this was her motive is plain from the fact that the question she asks is one of purely historical interest; the temple at Mount Gerizim having been destroyed more than a hundred years before. In His reply Christ condemns the origin of the Samaritan schism, rebukes the unmeaning formalism of the worship of her nation, and assures her that the time was now come when

Christ visits Samaria.

The well of Sychar.

Living water.

Spiritual worship.

true worshipers were to worship the Father neither in that mountain, nor yet in Jerusalem only, but everywhere in spirit and in reality not externally (σαρκι), but with the heart (πνευματι); not in shadows, but in substance and in truth (ἀληϑεια*). He then revealed himself to her as the Christ; and His declaration, connected with the recollection of His previous disclosures concerning her own history, led her to believe. To impart her convictions, and partly to confirm them, she hastens to her fellow-citizens, and with the natural exaggeration of a new convert, said, "Come see a man which told me all things that ever I did; is not this the Christ?" (John iv. 1–29.)

Ever true to the great end of His calling, and finding His bodily frame strengthened by His work, our Lord, immediately after the woman had withdrawn, seeks to deepen spiritual life in the minds of His disciples. He had spoken to the woman of living water, and now He speaks of living bread; and answers their request that He would eat, and their wondering unbelief of His meaning, (v. 34,) by reminding them that, to do the will of God from the heart, is itself the source of spiritual and even of physical strength.

Activity itself sustaining.

Before the lesson is quite learned, their attention is called to a new scene. From the city crowds follow the woman towards the well where the stranger is seated, and the ripening harvest suggests an appropriate image both of their numbers, and of the results of our Saviour's message. (v. 35.) For the first time Christ is invited to remain with them, and in the end very many believed; some for the saying of the woman, but many more because of His own word; "for," said they, "we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the

Many believe.

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* Here, as frequently, ἀλήϑεια must be taken to mean the opposite of σκιά, not of ψεῦϑος; substance rather than truth.

Christ, the Saviour of the world." (v. 42.) This is the first awakening on a large scale, and has few parallels during our Lord's personal ministry. Ordinarily the seed of the kingdom found a resting-place in only individual hearts—here it is deposited in the hearts of the people generally, producing results which became in this very district still more extensive in the first age of the church. (Acts viii. 5–8.)

First extensive success of the Gospel.

39. It is to us peculiarly instructive that the first extensive success of the Gospel message was manifested among those who witnessed no miracle. The message itself seems to have been to this people an evidence of its truth. They heard the words of our Lord, and in simple faith they believed.

Achieved without miracles.

In the whole narrative, too, there is much that is instructive, especially in relation to the provisions of the Gospel, and the nature of true worship. The living water that Christ gives, His Spirit, His doctrine itself, is said to quench the thirst and satisfy the desires of all who drink. The longings of the mind are drawn away by it from all transitory things, and are fixed upon the continued enjoyment of the blessings which are here rendered accessible to man; and in that continued enjoyment all human desire is fulfilled. "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst."

Christ Himself the living water.

Let us illustrate this truth. If men need *pardon*, and listen to the divine message, "It is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners," "being justified by faith," they "have peace with God." If they need *holiness*, and remember believingly the truth that Christ came to redeem men from all iniquity, (Tit. ii. 14,) and to present them perfect before the presence of His Father, that the certainty of this

Meets the desire for pardon.

Holiness.

result is secured by the power of the truth, by the influence of the Spirit, by the reward due to Christ's suffering, by the oath and character of God, they become holy. If amid ten thousand foes they need *conscious safety*, let them remember that He that is with them is mightier than all that are against them; that God will not suffer (1 Cor. x. 13) them to be tempted above what they are able to bear; and they will feel secure. If they need *happiness*, in spite of saddening change and multiplied affliction, Christ reminds them that they are to "take no thought." "All things" are theirs; the world itself being but the scaffolding of the church; God has not spared His own Son, and will assuredly, having given Him, give with Him all things; that they have moreover in heaven a more enduring substance. If they need *preparation for death*, they may remember that those who believe in Christ never die; that to them death is but a change in the circumstances of their life; and that though that change is itself terrible, with its groans, and agonies, and dying strife, it is but a shadow with which they contend—a foe, yet an unsubstantial one; while even in that conflict God is with them, His rod and His staff, the symbol of His power, and His sustaining word, comforts them. This, then, is our Lord's teaching. Let men but receive the doctrine and Spirit of Christ, and the largest desires of their heart—for pardon, for safety, for holiness, for present and future happiness—are all fulfilled. Drinking of the water He gives, they "shall never thirst." And now the figure is changed. The water which thus meets the desires of all Christians, is also a diffusive and fructifying stream, blessing others as well as themselves; nor does it rest till, bearing along all who are partakers of it, it has reached the eternal fountain whence it sprung (ver. 10–14).

Safety.

Happiness.

Eternal life.

The nature of spiritual worship.

40. Not less striking are the sublime disclosures which Christ here makes on the nature of spiritual service, and on the folly of making our worship depend on our presence amid scenes of imaginary sacredness. "The hour is coming, when neither in this mountain, nor yet in Jerusalem, shall men worship the Father." (v. 21.) He, in this one sentence, overturns a whole host of Jewish predilections, and lays the basis of the spiritual consecration of the Gospel.

Relation of Christ's teaching on this subject to the ancient economy.

Under the earlier dispensation God had specially visited various scenes; but without making them by His visit the more suitable for purposes of worship. Moses reared no altar at the burning bush, though God's presence for the time made it holy. Joshua put no permanent structure for worship on the place which had been pressed by the feet of the Captain of the Lord's host, though this, too, for the time of the vision, was also holy. Even several visits to a spot did not consecrate it as a place where worship would be peculiarly acceptable. Moses therefore pitched no tabernacle amid the crags of Sinai, honored as its rocky heights had been by the cloud, and flame, and voice, and law. Nor did even the selection of a place by God Himself for purposes of worship make it holy, independently of the character of the worshipers, and of His own immediate presence. He chose the threshing-floor of Ornan for the site of His temple, and as the place where He would put His name; yet when thus designated, and crowned by an edifice which was planned by Himself and built by His chosen servant, it was not truly consecrated till God Himself came there, and the Shekinah settled in glory upon the mercy-seat between the wings of the cherubim. It was God's stay in the place, therefore, that gave it sacredness; and when man wrought provocation and idolatries there, this sacredness passed away.

So it was in earlier times with Bethel, where Jacob and his children long after him worshipped. In the time of the prophets, it was called no more Bethel (God's house), but Bethaven, because idolatry had made it the "house of vanity." So in later times with Jerusalem, the wickedness of Manasseh profaned the temple, and the symbols of the Divine presence were withdrawn. (Ezek. x. 4, 18.)

No sanctity of place under the Gospel.

This great truth,—that holiness is not the place where God has been, that it is not even in the place which God has selected, but in the Divine presence itself,—had been, towards the end of the Jewish dispensation, gradually perverted and forgotten. Men attached to the place the reverence due only to God. They forgot that the character of the worshipers, even under that dispensation, might affect and destroy the sacredness of the Sanctuary itself; and they did not understand that Christ was come to call attention to the nature of true worship, and to give prominence to a truth which was wrapped up in the old economy, and readily discoverable, but which the worldly minds of the Jews had overlooked or disregarded. The sanctity of places was about to pass away. Instead of one spot, all regions were about to become available for worship. When Christ had risen, therefore, the temple, though still retaining to the eyes of the Jews its old glory, had lost it to the spiritual and instructed disciples. Its sacrifices were now unmeaning after the great oblation of Golgotha. Its veil was rent at the crucifixion, and its holy place made common. In prospect of this event Christ disowned it: "Your house is left unto you desolate." It was still rich in marble, and purple, and gold; but its Great Inhabitant was gone, and it was a *temple* no more.

Illustrated in the arrangements of the early church

Another dispensation had been introduced, and a far different worship. Let us mark these worshipers, and the scene of their meeting. In an obscure lane in Jerusalem the disciples are assembled. It is the humble resort of humble people, but it is the resort of spiritual worshipers. The rushing mighty wind of the Holy Spirit has shaken and filled this dwelling; not to remain here, but to rest upon the company that occupies it. Henceforth God is with them; he has no longer one site for his temple; that temple pitches itself wherever his people wander and sojourn. Its sanctity is to be ever after in the character of its occupants.

And it is instructive to notice how, in all the earlier arrangements of the Apostolic churches, God's providence seems to have developed and confirmed this principle. Every thing seems done to guard the disciples against practices that might have favored this obsolete idea of a local sanctity. "If any soil could have retained such a quality under the new dispensation, it would have been that of Calvary; but the upper chamber, where the Pentecostal baptism of the Holy Ghost was received, was not, as far as we have any reason to suppose, built upon the spot where Christ's cross was planted. Nor did Joseph of Arimathea give up for holy purposes the sepulchre where Christ had been buried, and which had been the scene of his resurrection. The next in sacredness certainly was the Mount of Olives. Near its ridge, toward the Jordan, he had raised Lazarus from the dead; from its side towards Jerusalem he had shed tears over the doomed city of his murderers—doomed, because she knew not the day of her visitation; near its foot he had suffered the anguish of Gethsemane; from its summit he ascended to the skies."* Yet it was not here that the first houses of prayer were erected, and the lesson is thus rendered complete. The sanctity of our dispensation belongs to the worshipers and to the service; not to the place. If Christ's truth and ordinances

God is wherever his truth and true worshippers are.

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* Dr. Williams.

are administered, and there are spiritual worshipers, there is He; the waiting heart every where meets a waiting God:

> "Where'er we seek him he is found,
> And every place is hallowed ground."

How touching that these truths were first delivered to one who had no earthly temple, and to whom they must have come, not only as a rebuke, but as the richest consolation!

SECT. 7.—THE FIRST REJECTION OF CHRIST BY HIS COUNTRYMEN.

Christ visits Nazareth.

41. To complete the view we have given of Christ's entrance upon his ministry, we need last of all to contemplate the result of His labors in Nazareth, "where he had been brought up." His work began, as we have seen, at Cana, where he wrought his first miracle. His miraculous powers were next put forth in Jerusalem, (John iv. 45,) though nothing is told of the works He performed there. At Jerusalem, too, He explained to Nicodemus the doctrine of regeneration, and announced His own sacrifice. Afterwards His mission was attested for the third time (John iii. 30) by John the Baptist; and subsequently to this last attestation, Jesus proceeds through Samaria; till at length He reaches the place where He had resided for several years. When at Cana, on His way, He wrought His second miracle in Galilee; healing a nobleman's son, who was lying sick at the neighboring town of Capernaum. (John iv. 46–54.)

42. At Nazareth He was known as a poor and apparently unlettered man. He was regarded as the son of a carpenter; He had himself exercised the same craft in the place.* His immediate connections were also still there—

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* Hence Mark says they called him the carpenter, (ὁ τέκτων.) Matthew

Reads and announces his office in the synagogue.

His mother and His relatives—the reputed father having probably died some time before. Here Christ entered the synagogue, and, being invited, stood up and read providentially, or perhaps in the ordinary course of reading, part of the 61st chapter of Isaiah. In that passage the prophet speaks of one who was yet to be revealed, and to whom the title of "the servant of the Lord" was to be peculiarly applicable. This servant is anointed, or consecrated by the Spirit for a great work, not so much of majesty as of condescension; of miraculous love rather than of miraculous power. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for He hath anointed (ἔχρισε) me to preach the Gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind; to set at liberty them that are bruised, and to preach the acceptable year of the Lord"—the year, that is, of acceptance and of release. The whole passage our Lord explains as fulfilled in himself, whom, therefore, He represents as the Messiah, the Anointed One, the Christ.

Appropriateness of his message.

43. This disclosure was simple, and appropriate to the occasion. In Nazareth Christ was known as poor; He therefore reveals Himself as the friend of the poor. The Nazarenes were of old despised, and to the despised and broken-hearted, He tells them, He came. As soon as He had delivered the message, He saw at once that His hearers could not penetrate the concealing cloud of earthly circumstances which veiled his glory. They knew His connections, and deemed Him one of themselves. At first, indeed, they were pleased with His communication, and were constrained to acknowledge that a Divine grace pervaded it; but ultimately their earthly conceptions prevailed. (Luke iv. 24.) Christ

says they called him (ὁ τοῦ τέκτονος υἱός) the son of a carpenter; and, no doubt, both descriptions are employed.

had foreseen this issue, and now showed them at once their failing. "Ye will say to me," said He, "physician, heal thyself." "Thou hast spoken of our poverty, remove thine own; of our being fretted and exhausted in heart, art thou less so than we? Heal thyself, and we may believe." How unworthy these thoughts! It was not of the earthly poor He had spoken; though, as ever, His language was sufficiently mysterious to mislead the negligent. Nor does true benevolence heal itself in the first instance, though selfishness may prefer that order. Both parts of their reply, therefore, are degrading. "Show us at least (as our Lord continues to express their feelings) such miracles as thou hast exhibited elsewhere; and let us share the benefit that Capernaum has received."* But Christ saw their unbelief. (Matt. xiii. 58; Mark vi. 6.) "Prophets have least honor," says he again, "among their relatives, and in their father's house." The divine or heavenly element in holy characters becomes concealed, or is overlooked through familiarity; and one who has seemed near in the flesh, cannot easily be regarded as superior in the spirit. "And besides," He adds, "God has always been a sovereign in the gifts of his grace, and in the exercise of that sovereignty has been free to pity and heal the distant, withholding the blessing from those that are near." The fact was undoubted. It ought to have humbled, and might have cheered them. But their pride had been wounded, and they proceeded to drive out their prophet, and so to fulfill His own intimation. They were even bent upon taking His life; but "He, passing through the midst of them, went His way," miraculously withdrawing that teaching which would have proved its miraculous power in saving them, if only they had believed. (Luke iv. 30.)

Remonstrates with the people for their unbelief.

Is rejected.

Hardly escapes with His life.

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* These miracles are said to be done εἰς Καπερναουμ.

Matthew and Mark intimate, in conclusion, that Jesus performed few miracles in Nazareth; Mark adding, that He healed a few sick people only, by laying His hands upon them; and that he could not do any mighty work there, because of their unbelief.

Faith on man's part essential.

44. Faith is here very strikingly taught as a condition indispensable to the prudent exercise of miraculous power. As God can save no impenitent sinner, as such, who refuses to humble himself for his sin, so Christ cannot heal where faith is wanting. The aim of miracles, therefore, was not first of all to create faith in those who were the subjects of them; but at most, to purify and confirm it. They presuppose faith, which is clearly a quality more of the affections than of the intellect; and involves, at least, a willing, receptive, and obedient heart.

The conduct of the Nazarenes repeated elsewhere.

45. Nor does this issue of our Lord's labors differ materially from other events in His personal ministry. As the fellow-townsmen of Christ did not believe, so neither at first did his own relatives (John vii. 5); nor as a nation did the Jews, for "He came unto His own and His own received Him not;" and therefore ultimately the kingdom of God passed over to the Gentiles. Clearly, those who are most familiar with Christ may know him least; and their rejection of Him supplies the saddest evidence of the worldliness of human conceptions, and of the pride of the human heart. From the very first the rule seems to have obtained—"some believed and some believed not." (Acts xxviii. 24.) To a faithful minister it is a sad consolation that the failure of his ministry in conversion may spring, not from the deficiencies of his own service, but from the guilty unbelief of those who hear him.

SECT. 8.—CHRIST INCARNATE. THE REVELATION OF GOD AND THE MODEL OF HOLINESS.

"He that hath seen the Son hath seen the Father." "Walk even as he walked."

Import of the Incarnation.

46. FROM the history of our Lord, thus far, it is clear that there is a mysterious dignity connected with His person. St. John describes him as the Word made flesh; and the other Evangelists use expressions no less startling and peculiar; implying as they do a nature at once human and divine. This doctrine of the incarnation of Christ, "God manifest in the flesh," has excited much discussion; and has sometimes been regarded as a grave objection to the Christian scheme. A little inquiry, however, will be found not only to justify the doctrine itself, but to show that if revelation is to be adapted to man's expectations and wants, a God incarnate is one of the truths which revelation is most likely to contain.

An Infinite being cannot in his nature be known by men.

47. An infinite being cannot in his nature be known by men. God is infinite and absolute. But the idea of an infinite and an absolute being it is impossible to describe or conceive. There is nothing in heaven nor on earth which we can use to define him; and all analogies rather confound than clear our conceptions. In His own nature He is without form; yet he is neither a point in space nor space without limit. He dwells everywhere and always, and is yet without parts and above time. The only definition we can give is His own; He is the I AM—the self-existent Jehovah.

Nor in his perfections.

If we proceed to speak not of his nature but of His perfections, our conceptions become, if possible, even less adequate, He thinks; but free from what is essential to our thought, succession, and time. He reasons without inference; decides without deliberation;

feels without emotion; acts and rests without movement or change.

Where revealed, it must be through some medium: such revelation necessarily imperfect.

48. Wherever therefore God is revealed by creation, it must be under conditions in themselves neither infinite nor spiritual. There is no such thing in nature as an infinite medium of revelation. The One must appear in the many; the spirit in forms; the infinite in the finite; the absolute in the conditional. He must show himself by acts, or signs, or words, each of which will represent much, but each of which will certainly misrepresent more. When He appears in creation, it is as power limited, goodness mixed, eternity evanescent and changing; when He employs human speech, He is constrained to use terms that are already devoted to visible or inferior things. Every such revelation is more or less imperfect and contradictory; though there was once a being made in God's image, and who, as a creature adapted to the highest ends of intelligence and moral action, was a noble illustration of His wisdom and an evidence of His love; yet that being is now deformed. Sin, prejudice, passion, stains of every color so mar our race, that the glory of the Divine Creator is visible no longer; and even if man had remained unfallen, he must have been at best a finite and imperfect type: truer and more complete because of his noble spiritual character, than anything inanimate; but still involving, as a revelation of God, many obvious contradictions.

Creation.

Human language.

Fallen man.

If, therefore, it be any objection to the doctrine of the Incarnation, that it involves the mystery of an embodiment of the infinite in the finite, and that even with this revelation God is not so efficiently revealed as to be cleared of all incomprehensibleness; the answer is at hand. Every revelation, which God has ever given, is liable to the same objection; nor to finite minds can any revelation be given that shall be free from it. Every disclosure of such a Being must be necessarily imperfect. Creation, which outwardly represents his character, does its office inadequately. Words which utter human thought and feeling are equally inadequate; and even divine institutions contain in their phraseology or incidents something repugnant to the very idea of the God they represent.

Divine institutions: all unsatisfactory.

48. If it be true, moreover, that it is for Man this Divine revelation is intended, and that man was originally adapted to express the character of God, it follows that the Incarnation may become the richest and most appropriate manifestation of all. As creation sets forth "His eternal power and Godhead," so may the incarnation set forth with those attributes His moral perfections; and the one will be found to contain no contradiction or mystery which is not already contained in the other. Both are miraculous. Both are in certain aspects incomprehensible to finite minds; and the latter is on these accounts the more credible that the necessity for it was deeper, the circumstances of it are mightier, and the attributes it reveals livelier and holy. These attributes, moreover, are such as could be revealed only in human form; the attributes of condescension, of patience, of forgiveness, in one word—of love.

Christ incarnate the most complete revelation

49. The necessity of such a revelation is fully attested by various heathen systems. The idea of an embodiment of the divine in the human is common to them all. Hindooism has its uncreated light, and its successive incarnations; Brahm is now creator, and now preserver, and now destroyer; and in each relation he sustains a personal character. Buddhism, though professedly monotheistic and anti-material, believes in many incarnations; and regards every exhibition of intellect and power as a portion of the God-

Necessity of such a revelation attested by heathen systems.

head. It protested against the Brahminical doctrine that God had become man; and ended in maintaining the Buddhistic one that man was God. Mahomedanism, indeed, may be deemed an exception; and yet the God of the false prophet is entirely a personal agent, with only human feelings and schemes. He is always set forth in the person of the successors of Mahomet as he was pre-eminently in Mahomet himself. To decide the question, it may be added that the ancient Jewish economy, which was certainly monotheistic, abounds with representations which are unmeaning, unless on the supposition that God himself appeared in the likeness of man; guiding, instructing, and helping his people—representations that have all the effect of independent testimony; for though the Jews believed that those representations pointed to a Divine Messiah, the books that contain them were written before Christ appeared, and under circumstances that make collusion between their writers and our Lord absolutely incredible. An incarnate God, therefore, is the doctrine of all systems; and the peculiarity of Scripture is, that only there He is worthily and truly revealed.*

And by the Jewish.

50. Nor is it only that the doctrine of the incarnation of Christ has its representative in other systems. In one system or another the very purposes of His incarnation, and the necessity for it in order to accomplish them, are more or less distinctly recognised. The northern Odin, who answers to the Roman Mercury, was the *messenger* of the gods. The chief object of worship among the ancient Germans was one who connected heaven with earth, and both with the shades below. Sometimes he is man only, and has his personal history; sometimes he is God: but,

The purposes of such incarnation recognized in one or other of the heathen systems.

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* This was a frequent argument of the early apologists; and Cicero has not overlooked the fact, "Totum prope Cœlum nonne humano genere completum est." *Tusc. ques.* i. 13.

in either capacity, it is his character of *restorer of the broken relations* between the invisible world and ourselves that attracted the reverence of those ancient tribes.* Plato deemed the visit of such a being essential for the *discovery of true wisdom*, and the solution of the innumerable problems which human inquiry had started but could not solve. The sacrificial institutes of all nations pointed with more or less clearness to man's need of a propitiation; and for propitiation must not the victim be as to his flesh mortal, yet so gifted as to become an *immaculate and efficacions* offering. Others again, like the Mohammedans, worshipped energy, and regarded the Deity as the king of men. They sought, therefore, in their idea of religion for a Ruler and Head.

Hence Christ fulfills the predictions of the Jews and the expectations of the Gentiles.

51. All these wants, it will be observed, are met in Christ. He came as the very image of the Father's person and the brightness of His glory, to teach by example and by precept: as man, to die; as God-man, to unite heaven and earth, and to rule in God's stead over man. Thus did He take up at his coming the unfulfilled promises of every system, and accomplish them. He was not the prophet, priest, and king of the covenant only, but the Desire of all nations concentering in himself the longings of all. "In Him did all fullness dwell." On His head are many crowns; and concerning his teaching it may be affirmed, that not Israel only, but the isles (the regions of the Gentiles) waited for His law. (Is. xlii. 4.)

Incarnation: *natural* as a revelation of God; *necessary* as an example of perfect virtue.

52. Viewed therefore only as a medium of revelation, the incarnation of Christ seems natural; viewing Him still further, as our example, His incarnation seems absolutely necessary. In the first character He comes to announce the Divine will, and manifests, as far as our capa-

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* Tacitus, Germania.

cities will allow, the attributes of the invisible God; thus bringing God to man. In the second character He comes to aid and exalt our piety; to engage our affections; to give us a perfect type of holiness; in one word, to bring man to God; and for this purpose His incarnation seems not only appropriate but essential.

Man imitative.

A *perfect* example *adapted* to influence human *feeling* necessary.

Man is naturally imitative. Example sways him more than precept. All human models of excellence are imperfect; in copying them we insensibly blend their virtues with their faults, and too often admire both. At once to satisfy this tendency of human nature, and to guard against the evils connected with it, the ancient Stoics formed their model man; seeking by this creation to avoid on the one hand the dullness of abstract description, and on the other the imperfections incident to all visible excellence. Copying a perfect example as the surest way of attaining a perfection became, in their teaching, a settled law.

To this scheme (which, however, was perhaps the best that was practicable in their position) there lay the fatal objection that the whole character was ideal; defective of course in its virtue, and above all in its influence. It inspired no interest; it awakened no sympathy. The whole plan was but one short remove from an abstract morality; it was free no doubt from many of the imperfections of living models, but eliciting none of the affectionate reverence which is excited by a real existing object, and exerting therefore no personal practical power.

Both found in Christ.

This double want, first of a perfect character, and secondly of a perfect character vested with all that can interest human feeling, the Incarnation supplies. It exhibits spotless, living virtue; corrects in actual practice the errors of human nature; and realizes a nobler picture of excellence than the conceptions of ancient philosophy ever formed; the more touching and impressive from the humble station which Christ filled, and the solemn duties he came to discharge. His was virtue struggling that it might be triumphant; the very form which it must ever assume in the history of our race.

These views confirmed by apostolic teaching

Virtue copying Christ.

53. The best exposition of these remarks is found in the way in which the apostles speak of holiness. To begin the Divine life we are "quickened with Christ." In our baptism we are "buried with Christ;" "we rise with Christ;" we remember Him who before many witnesses witnessed a good confession, and so we are "to put on Christ." (Eph. ii. 5; Rom. vi. 4; 1 Tim. vi. 13; Rom. xiii. 14.) In persecution we are told of Him who "endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself; and who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame." Beneficence is enforced by appeals to the example of Him, who "though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor." We are to love one another as "Christ loved us." Even relative duties are enjoined in the same form; and husbands are to "love their wives as Christ loved the church." All excellence is summed up in the comprehensive precept that we are to do what is pleasing to the Lord, and to purify ourselves even as He is pure; "looking unto Him the author and finisher of our faith." (Heb. xii. 3.)

Happiness, union with Him.

And as all virtue is thus represented, not in the abstract, but in the person of Christ, so all happiness is dependent on our union with Him. "If a man love me he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." To die, is, in apostolic language, "to depart and be with Christ." The sum of all blessedness is "to be forever with the Lord." "Having suffered with Him, we shall also be glorified together." This is the sum

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of *all* blessedness; for another apostle is contented to remain in comparative ignorance of a future life, under the conviction that it involves conformity to the pattern of the Great Master, and admission to His presence. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." (1 John iii. 2.) To be like Him is complete holiness, and to be with Him is eternal unspeakable joy; terms that clearly imply a personal Christ; the incarnation at once of virtue and love.

Consequent identity of Christ and His church.

54. It is in fact through His incarnation that the church is identified with her Lord. She reads in His history her own; she follows His steps, she becomes the image and reflection of His life. He came at first in lowliness, and in lowliness His church began; He was visited with the Holy Ghost at the Jordan, and she at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost; He labored in weariness and watchings, and she is still a pilgrim and a stranger upon the earth; He was made perfect through suffering, and ascended from the cross to His crown, and here, too, she is the heir of His destiny. In this respect He has left her an example; and to "follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth," is a description of both her noblest office and her richest reward.

SECT. 9.—CHRIST INCARNATE A SAVIOUR THROUGH SUFFERING.

The incarnation in relation to suffering.

55. In the person of our Lord, then, we have God revealed and the law set forth. He is at once the express image of the Father, and the living model of holiness. In Him we see what God is, and what man ought to be. The connection between His incarnation and his sufferings is yet to be considered. He became man that He might suffer and die. He was

"made of a woman . . . under the law that He might redeem us from its curse, and that we might receive the adoption of sons." (Gal. iii. 13; iv. 4.) "Forasmuch as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same, that through death He might destroy him that hath the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." "Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren." "And in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted." (Heb. ii. 14, 15, 18.)

Let us mark what these expressions entail.

Christ man: what this involved.

56. He came in our nature. He was made of a woman. The Creator appeared as a creature; the ever blessed God, a mourner. The Author of life, light, and happiness, has Himself wept tears. One who is infinitely holy, and the Giver of all law, has become obedient to law, and has been seen in strange contact with sin: these are facts whose amazing significance can be forgotten only through familiarity, and they are of the deepest interest to our race,

Contact with sin.

Sin and misery, holiness and happiness, form the opposite sides of the universe. The whole of the mystery connected with them none can unravel. We know little more than that they are irreconcileable antagonists, and that by a gracious arrangement the dark elements of evil will be in the end subservient to the principle of good. To the side of holiness Christ belonged. Sin, which is opposed to it, he abhorred with an intensity which no fallen creature can conceive; and yet, by sin and its shadow—misery—He was for years surrounded. They touched him in every nerve. Heaven and its purity were exchanged for earth and its corruptions. Here he lived, and here at length He died in such suffering as can be explained only on the supposition that He had been charged with the sins of the world, and was bearing the penalty due to them all.

What such a life involved it is not easy to say; but it might be imagined, if one eminently holy were called, by some mysterious arrangement, to spend part of his eternity in hell. In the case of such a sufferer, however, the shock which his moral nature would undergo in listening to the blasphemy and in witnessing the wretchedness of the lost, would be less painful than was endured on earth by our Lord. Heaven and earth must have presented contrasts more striking to HIM than would be presented by earth and hell to the holiest of mankind. Amidst the sadness and temptations to which this hourly contact with evil exposed Him, our Lord entered upon His work and fulfilled the duties of His ministry.

Christ under law.

57. Nor was it only that Christ appeared as man. He was *made under the law;* placed therefore in the same position in relation to it as were those whom he came to redeem. His mental and moral constitution was essentially the same as ours. He had an intellect like our own, adapted for the investigation of truth. He had a conscience, too, to perceive the relation in which He stood to other beings, and to recognize the duties which those relations implied. He had a will to decide His choice, and affections to impel him to action. In all points (sin only excepted) He was one of ourselves.

Subject to it.

He was under the law, and therefore subject to all its requirements. He was bound to obey what it enjoined; to avoid what it condemned. Created under it, he was also to be judged by it; and, though this subjection was founded on His own act, yet still it was as complete as if He had been descended immediately and directly from the first transgressors.

Answerable for his acts.

In this condition He was of course liable *personally* to all the consequences of His acts. To Him the command came, as to ourselves, with both promise and threatening: "Indignation, wrath, tribulation, and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil;" "glory, honor, and peace to every man that worketh good." (Rom. ii. 8–10.) With this announcement before Him, He became, by fulfilling the law, entitled in His human nature to its rewards, as by disobedience He would have become in His human nature, and on His own account subject to its penalty and curse.

Entitled for others to the consequences of them.

In this condition, moreover, He was entitled to the results of His obedience for all whom he represented. It is clearly a principle of God's present government that we suffer through one another. The state and interests of each generation depend largely on the character and doings of preceding generations, as all have suffered in consequence of the acts of our first parents. How this connection is maintained, we need not enquire. Still less need we enquire whether the constitution of the world might not have been so arranged as to make all men independent of one another for good and for evil. The *fact* is, that Christ came into a world where this close connection had been already established, and himself subject to it. By one man's offence many were made sinners; by one man's obedience (if he be obedient) many shall be made righteous. (Rom. v. 19.)

Under this law, then, and subject to its conditions, Christ appeared. He came to obey; He exposed himself to all the consequences of failure; and, in the event of His success, he became entitled, as Mediator, to all the honors of obedience. If He keep the law without blemish, He is himself accepted, and for us there is hope. If, on the other hand, He fail; if, through his own weakness or by the subtility of the devil, He shall be seduced in thought or word from the narrow line of perfect holiness, our ruin is irremediable and complete. Paradise lost is lost for ever. Christ must bear the common curse: the Divine plan of recovery, which embodies the maturest fruits of infinite wisdom, proves abortive; and the blessed God himself is left to deplore the ruin, which His own frustrated beneficence makes only the more touching and profound.

58. With these facts in view, we may appreciate in some measure the fearful responsibility and consequent suffering which the life of Christ involved.

Suffering involved in this arrangement.

In common life the happiness and destiny of men sometimes depend upon the acts of an hour or a day. When the importance of such seasons is seen, men enter upon them with the keenest anxiety; and, if that anxiety continues, it becomes intolerable. Protracted doubt under such circumstances is what few can bear.

Sometimes, again, in the history of our race, not only men's own destiny is dependent upon their decisions, but the destiny of others; and then the anxiety is, to benevolent minds, yet more oppressive. Happily there are few occasions on which men are called to act habitually under the weight of such responsibility; but, when the occasion occurs, it is generally found that, unless they be sustained by eminent virtue, either their hearts become callous, or their minds give way under the strain. History abounds with illustrations of both results.

Man's happiness, God's honor suspended on it.

Now in the case of the Messiah, the happiness, not of Himself alone, but of millions, was suspended upon the results of His obedience. If He fall, the world must fall, and fall for ever. For not only were the interests of time and of the body at stake, but the interests of eternity and of the soul. Nor these interests alone. He had undertaken to magnify the law;

to honor what man had treated with contempt; and to give to the universe an example of perfect obedience. If He fall, the law and the government of God must fall; and thenceforth the justice and the mercy of the Eternal are covered with confusion. Can any finite mind measure the weight of this responsibility?

What wonder that Christ Himself longed for the time when it should cease; "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" (Luke xii. 50.) And what wonder that angels ministered to Him; that Moses and Elias, the representatives of earlier dispensations, appeared and conversed with Him on His coming death; (Matt. xvii;) and that God Himself cheered and strengthened Him when he seemed sinking under His load! (John xii. 28.)

Burden increased by circumstances.

59. Everything, moreover, was adapted to increase the burden. The responsibility rested on Him not for an hour or a day, but during every act, and thought, and motive of His whole life. Had He been influenced by one guilty, or even imperfect motive, had His love to God or man for one moment faltered, His probation must have ceased, and His contemplated sacrifice have been rendered of no avail for us, being required for Himself. . . . All around Him, too, was calculated to exhaust His love, and to tempt Him to disobedience. Everywhere was contamination, had He been disposed to yield to it. By all He was treated unjustly, and injustice might have exasperated Him. His countrymen returned hatred for love, and His love might have failed. . . . Doubts were thrown upon His relation with the Father; facts were appealed to in confirmation of them, and His filial confidence might have given place to distrust. . . . Men who are engaged in arduous enterprises unite with themselves others who comprehend their plans and sympathize with their purpose. Such association

lightens anxiety, even when it does not bring complete relief. But Christ stood by Himself. His brethren did not believe in Him. (John vii. 5.) His most promising disciples misunderstood the very designs of His mission. (Luke xviii. 34; John xii. 26.) "He trod the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with Him.". . . In this burdened and lonely state, He encountered sufferings such as no other being on earth ever endured. He came to redeem, and how was He welcomed? Within a few months of His birth, Herod sought His life. He travels over Judea and Galilee; and, wherever He goes, heals all manner of sickness and disease; but He is without a home. "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man had not where to lay His head." If He work miracles, they are ascribed to the devil; if He does not work them, the people deny His authority. (Matt. xii. 24–38.) He comes in humble form, and calls Himself the Son of man. His hearers then take occasion to despise His poverty and birth. He claims to be the equal of the Father, and they accuse Him of blasphemy. (John vi., vii.) He speaks plainly, and they seek to put Him to death; He speaks in proverbs, and they say He is mad, and hath a devil. (John x. 19, 20, 36–39.) In either case He is regarded as an impostor of the vilest description, as smitten and blasted even of God. (Isa. liii. 4.) They that hated him without a cause, were more than the hairs of His head. (Ps. lxix. 1–4.) . . . Nor was this all. The hosts of darkness seem to have had, in the days of our Lord, peculiar power over the human race, and that power was no doubt exerted to the utmost. Of all who ever appeared in human nature, Christ was most exposed to it. With the view of seducing Him into sin, the temptations of the wilderness were conducted by the Prince of darkness himself; and from that history it may be concluded that every circumstance of the life of Christ was employed in succession with consummate skill to lead him astray. Those temptations occurred in the wilderness, and before the more severe of the trials of His ministry had begun. What must they have been among the multitude, when the malignity of His enemies and the falseness of His friends had so bitterly wounded Him, and the various incidents of His life afforded better hope that they might be tried with success!

Approach of final struggle.

60. Amid such trials, and under the burden of these responsibilities, Christ moved on to the closing scenes of His life. In prospect of these, He prayed earnestly that the cup might pass from Him. So intense was the struggle, that blood was forced from every pore of His body; the agony too great for endurance. For this hour, however, He had come. The cup was not removed, and He was now to drink it to its last dregs. His disciples leave Him; the boldest and most zealous of their number denies with oaths that he even knew Him. He is charged with blasphemy; a reproach that might well have broken His heart. The people whom He came to save have conspired to murder Him; and they begin the accomplishment of their purpose with the cruelty of merciless ruffians. The night that introduced the day on which he suffered, had been spent in the agony of the garden—in visiting, at the command of his persecutors, all parts of the city, and in pleading before five successive tribunals. These exhausting struggles have passed, and now He is condemned. The spotless Son of God is to die the death of a felon and a slave. He is smitten with the fist, and tauntingly asked to tell who smote Him. He is spit upon and scourged, crowned with thorns and mocked, and then led away to be crucified. Compelled to carry His cross, He faints under it; but at length He is nailed to it, to endure a painful and lingering death. Here, with an emaciated frame, His physical strength prostrated

Its severity.

by continued watching, His power of self-control, weakened by suffering and the approach of death, began a conflict severer than any He had yet known, and involving in its result the permanence of all his past achievements, and the destinies of the moral universe of God.

That struggle carried on with every possible disadvantage.

"It was the hour and the power of darkness." The warfare was well nigh accomplished; but one final struggle remained. Every human aid had for some time been withdrawn; the moment of nature's utmost weakness was come; and that moment was chosen by his foes for the crisis of our race. If now He can be tempted—if but one impatient desire or selfish thought can be excited within, there is hope that the plan of mercy may prove a failure, and the dominion of fallen spirits be restored.

Nor only so. So far He had been sustained by communion with His Father. Often had He retired from active labor, to seek solace in the consciousness of that presence and love. But all is now at an end. He has chosen His work: He is pleased to bear our sins, and He must abide by the consequences of His choice. Since that agony of the garden, another trial has been completed, and another sentence passed. In spirit, Christ has been arraigned at God's bar under the imputation of human guilt; and now justice claims her own. Even with the representative of sinners, in that dread moment, God can hold no intercourse, nor can God give help. "O my God, I cry in the day time, but thou hearest not." "Our fathers trusted in thee; they trusted, and thou didst deliver them." "But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people." "My God, My God! why hast thou forsaken me?"*

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* Psalm xxii. 2, 4, 6, 1.

61. "The moments of agony roll slowly away—the power of hell has gained no advantage—the Messiah, strong in His own unaided virtue, has baffled every attack of earth and hell, and shines glorious in untarnished holiness. His last moment has arrived. Doth He yet retain His integrity? Doth He, amidst these unfathomable trials of His benevolence, still love His neighbor as Himself? Hearken to the prayer that quivers upon his parched and fevered lips: 'Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.' Although forsaken of His Father and His God, doth He yet trust in Him with filial confidence? Hearken again: 'Father, into Thy hands I commit my spirit.'"* The conflict is over; all is finished; man is still the object of pity and love, and God of reverence and trust.

Its successful issue.

The work of our salvation is now achieved. The apostate race of Adam is delivered from the curse; the broken law is doubly vindicated—first, by the obedience of the Lawgiver, and then by His endurance of the penalty; and the whole has been effected at a cost of suffering, and under a continued burden of responsibility, such as none on earth can conceive. Hence the dignity of the Conqueror. "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, and every tongue confess." (Phil. ii. 9.) Hence also, as He ascended into heaven, a new song burst from the lips of the redeemed of every kindred and tongue: "saying with a loud voice, worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing." Hence the repetition of the strain: "Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."

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* Dr. Wayland's Sermons.

Such were the sufferings of our Lord. How blessed the arrangement that laid help on one so mighty! How unspeakable the love that was willing to endure such suffering, and incur such risks for the sake of a race that had willfully broken a righteous and beneficent law!

Efficacy of His sufferings involves His divinity; the intensity of them His manhood.

62. To complete the view of the sufferings of Christ, we must regard them from another poiut. As man, He was rendered capable of suffering; but it is as God that His sufferings have an infinite value, and become more than equivalent to the penalty originally denounced against transgression. His human nature made suffering possible; His Divine made it efficient; and both illustrate the wisdom and love which devised and executed the scheme. This point of view we shall occupy hereafter. The thing to be noticed now, is, that the very incarnation and obedience of our Lord involved sufferings and responsibility such as no finite mind had ever known or can now conceive; and that under the continued burden of this responsibility He went forth teaching and preaching, exhibiting *in Himself*, in the meantime, the great truths of the kingdom of God.

A Saviour "under law," our example as well as sacrifice.

63. Combining the facts of this section with those of the preceding, we gain a new view of the sufferings of our Lord. Even if He had not come to make atonement for sin, an Incarnate teacher, free from suffering, could never have been a perfect model of holiness. As our example, no less than as our sacrifice, He needed to be *made under the law.*

CHAPTER IV.

CHRIST THE TEACHER AND PROPHET: THE LAW: HIS OWN WORK: FAITH.

§ 1. Lessons taught in the earlier miracles of our Lord.

§ 2. The sermon on the mount. Christ the fulfillment of the law in morality and doctrine.

§ 3. Christ's teaching in relation to His own work, and the necessity of faith in Him.

§ 4. Christ's further disclosures in Galilee and Judæa.

§ 5. Teaching by parables.

FROM NEARLY THE COMMENCEMENT OF OUR LORD'S TEACHING TILL THE LAST PASSOVER.

Date.	Matthew.	Mark.	Luke.	John.	Place.	Ord. Nar.	Miracle.	Discourse.	Parable
	iv. 18–22	i. 16–20	v. 1–11	—	Capernaum.		Draught of fishes.		
June	”	”		—	”	Call of Simon and Andrew: of James and John.			
A.D. 27	—	i. 21–28	iv. 31–37	—	”		Heals a demoniac.		
Ush. 30	xviii. 14–17	i. 29–34	iv. 38–41	—	”		Heals Peter's wife's mother.		
							Heals all brought to him.		
	iv. 23–25	i. 35–39	iv. 42–44	—	—	Christ goes with his disciples through Galilee.			
							Casts out devils, (Mark i. 39.) and heals the sick.		
	viii. 2–4	i. 40–45	v. 12–16	—	Galilee.		Heals a leper and a great multitude. (Luke v. 15.)		
	ix. 2–8	ii. 1–12	v. 17–26	—	Capernaum.		Heals a paralytic and many others. (Luke v. 17.)		
March	ix. 9	ii. 13, 14	v. 27, 28	—	“	The call of Matthew.			
A.D. 28	—	—	—	v. 1–47	Jerusalem.		Christ heals the infirm man.		
Second	—	—	—	”	”			His Discourse thereon.	
Pass-	xii. 1–8	ii. 23–28	vi. 1–5	—	—	The disciples pluck the corn on the Sabbath.			
over.	xii. 9–14	iii. 1–6	vi. 6–11	—	Galilee.		Christ heals the withered hand.		
Ush. 31	xii. 15–21	iii. 7–12	—	—	—	Christ arrives at the sea of Tiberias.			
							Heals multitudes; unclean spirits confess him the Son of God. (Mark iii. 11.)		
	x. 2–4	iii. 13–19	vi. 12–19	—	Near Caper.	Christ chooses the twelve.		Heals great multitudes. (Luke.)	
	v. 1, viii. 1	—	vi. 20–49	—	”			Sermon on the mount.	
	viii. 5–13	—	vii. 1–10	—	Capernaum.		Christ heals the centurion's servant.		
	—	—	vii. 11–7	—	Nain.		Raises the widow's son.		
	xi. 2–19	—	vii. 18–35	—	Galilee.	John the Baptist sends disciples to Jesus.			
							Heals all kinds of diseases.		
	xi. 20–30	—	—	—	Capernaum.	Christ appeals to his mighty works.			
May	—	—	vii. 36–50	—	”	While at meat is anointed by a woman.			The two debtors.
A.D. 28	—	—	viii. 1–3	—	—	Christ makes a second circuit in Galilee with the twelve.			
							Heals many of infirmities, especially Mary Magdalene.		
	xii. 22–37	iii. 19–30	xi. 14, 15, 17	—	Galilee.		Heals the demoniac.	Scribes blaspheme.	
	xii. 38–45	—	xi. 16, 24–36	—	”	The Scribes seek a sign.			
	xii. 46–50	iii. 31–35	viii. 19–21	—	”	The true disciples of Christ his nearest relatives.			
	—	—	xi. 37–54	—	”	Christ denounces woes against the Pharisees.			
									The rich fool.
	—	—	xii. 1–59	—	”			Discourses to disciples and to multitude.	
	—	—	xiii. 1–9	—	”	Slaughter of certain Galileans.			The barren fig tree.
	xiii. 1–53	iv. 1–34	v. 4–18	—	Sea of Galilee				The sower, the tares, and other Parables.
	viii. 18–27	iv. 35–41	viii. 22–25	—	Sea of Galilee	Christ crosses the lake.			
	”	”	”	—	—		The tempest stilled.		
	viii. 28–34	v. 1–21	viii. 26–40	—	Sea of Galilee		The two demoniacs of Gadara healed.		

FROM NEARLY THE COMMENCEMENT OF OUR LORD'S TEACHING TILL THE LAST PASSOVER.

Date.	Matthew	Mark.	Luke.	John.	Place.	Ord. Nar.	Miracle.	Discourse.	Parable.
	ix. 1						The swine possessed.		
	ix. 10–17	ii. 15–22	v. 29–39	—	Capernaum.			Discourse on fasting.	
	ix. 18–26	v. 22–43	viii. 41–56	—	”		Jairus' daughter raised. The woman with an issue of blood.		
	ix. 27–34	—	—	—	”		Two blind men healed: dumb spirit cast out.		
	xiii. 54–58	vi. 1–6	—	—	—	Jesus again at Nazareth, and again rejected.			
Feb.							Heals a few sick folk.		
A.D. 29	ix. 35–38	vi. 6–13	ix. 1–6	—	Galilee.	A third circuit in Galilee. The twelve sent forth. (Mark vi. 13.)			
Ush. 32	x. 1–42	[29					Heals many (Matt. ix.), gives this power to his disciples.		
Apr.	xiv. 1, 2, 6–12	vi. 11–16, 21–	ix. 7–9	—	Perea.	Herod holds Christ to be John the Baptist.			
	xiv. 13–21	vi. 30–44	ix. 10–17	vi. 1–14	Capernaum.	The twelve return.			
							Heals all that need healing. (Luke ix. 11.) Five thousand fed.		
	xiv. 22–36	vi. 45–56	—	vi. 15–21	Sea of Galilee		He walks on the sea; Peter do. Calms the wind.		
							As many as touch him are healed.		
	—	—	—	vi. 22–71	Capernaum.			His discourse to the multitude and its results.	
	xv. 1–20	vii. 1–23	—	—	Capernaum.	Christ justifies his disciples for eating with unwashed hands.			
	xv. 21–28	vii. 24–30	—	—	Reg. of Tyre.		Heals daughter of Syrophœnician woman.		
	xv. 29–38	vii. 31–37	—	—	Decapolis.		Heals deaf and dumb and others.		
		viii. 1–9					Five thousand fed. Heals great multitudes. (Matt. xv. 30, 31.)		
	xv. 39, xvi. 1–4	viii. 10–12	—	—	Magdala.	The Pharisees again require a sign.			
	xvi. 4–12	viii. 13–21	—	—	N.E. of Galil.	The disciples cautioned against the leaven of the Pharisees			
	—	viii. 22–26	—	—	Bethsaida.		Heals blind man.		
	xvi. 13–20	viii. 27–30	ix. 18–21	—	Cesarea Phil.	Peter and the rest again profess their faith in Christ.			
May	xvi. 21–28	viii. 31–38, ix.	ix. 22–27	—	”		Our Lord foretells his death and resurrection.		
A.D. 28	xvii. 1–13	ix. 2–13 [1	ix. 28–36	—	”		The Transfiguration.		
							Moses and Elias, and a voice from the cloud. [disciples.		
	”	”	”	—	”			Christ's subsequent discourse with the three	
	xvii. 14–21	ix. 14–29	ix. 37–43	—	”		Heals demoniac, whom his disciples could not heal.		
	xvii. 22, 23	ix. 30–32	ix. 43–45	—	Galilee.		Again foretells his death and resurrection.		
	xvii. 24–27	ix. 33	—	—	Capernaum.		Tribute money miraculously provided.		
	xviii. 1–9	ix. 33–50	ix. 46–50	—	”	The disciples contend who shall be greatest. [ciful servant.			
Third	xviii. 10–35	—	—	—	”			Exhorts to humility and forbearance. Unmer-	
Feast.	—	—	ix. 51–62	vii. 2–10	—	Christ goes to the Feast of Tabernacles: final departure from Galilee.			
Oct.	—	—	x. 1–16	—	Samaria.	The seventy instructed and sent out.			
A.D. 28							Gives miraculous power to the disciples.		
	—	—	xvii. 11–19	—	”		Ten lepers cleansed.		
	—	—	—	vii. 11–53, i.	Jerusalem.	Jesus at the feast. His public teaching.			
	—	—	—	viii. 2–11	”	The women taken in adultery.			

FROM NEARLY THE COMMENCEMENT OF OUR LORD'S TEACHING TILL THE LAST PASSOVER.

Date.	Matthew.	Mark.	Luke.	John.	Place.	Ord. Nar.	Miracle.	Discourse.	Parable.
	——	——	——	viii. 12–59	"			Further public teaching.	
	——	——	x. 25–37	——	Near Jerusa.			The lawyer instructed. Love to our neighbor.	
	——	——	"	——	"				The good Samaritan.
	——	——	x. 38–42	——	Bethany.	Christ at the house of Martha and Mary.			
	——	——	xi. 1–13	——	Near Jerusa.			The disciples again taught to pray.	The friend [at midnight.
	——	——	x. 17–24	——	Jerusalem.	The seventy return.			
	——	——	——	ix. 1–41, x. 1–[21	"		The man born blind healed on the Sabbath.		
	——	——	——	"	"			Our Lord's discourse thereon.	
	——	——	——	x. 22–42	Jerusalem. Bethabara.	Christ at Jerusalem at the Feast of Dedication. He retires beyond Jordan. Disappears from his enemies. (John x. 39.)			
Dec. 19 A.D. 29	——	——	——	xi. 1–46	Bethany.		The raising of Lazarus.		
	——	——	——	xi. 47–54	Jerm. Ephm.	The counsel of Caiaphas. Christ returns from Jerusalem.			
	xix. 1, 2	x. 1	xiii. 10–21	——	Perea.		The healing of the infirm woman. Multitude healed. (Matt. [xix. 2.)		
	——	——	xiii. 22–35	——	"	Christ goes teaching to Jerusalem.			
	——	——	xiv. 1–24	——	"	Christ dines with a chief Pharisee on the Sabbath.	Heals a woman of the dropsy.		
	——	——	xiv. 25–35	——	"			Discourses on true disciples.	
	——	——	xv. 1–32	——	"				The lost sheep. The lost piece of money. The prodigal son.
	——	——	xvi. 1–13	——	"				The unjust steward.
	——	——	xvi. 14–31	——	Perea.			Reproves the Pharisees.	
	——	——	"	——	"				Rich man and Lazarus.
	——	——	xvii. 1–10	——	"			Inculcates faith, humility, and forbearance. The unprofitable servant.	
	——	——	xvii. 20–37	——	"			Nature of his coming.	
	——	——	xviii. 1–14	——	"				The importunate widow.
	——	——	"	——	"				Pharisee and publican.
	xix. 3–12	x. 2–12	——	——	"			Precepts respecting divorce.	
	xix. 13–15	x. 13–16	xviii. 15–17	——	"	Christ receives and blesses little children.			
	xix. 16–30	x. 17–31	xviii. 18–30	——	"	The rich young man visits him.			
	xx. 1–6	——	——	——	"				Laborers in the vineyard.
	xx. 17–19	x. 32–34	xviii. 31–34	——	"		Christ a third time foretells his death and resurrection.		
	xx. 20–28	x. 35–45	——	——	"	James and John make their ambitious request.			
Sat.	xx. 29–34	x. 46–52	xviii. 35–43, 1	——	Jericho.		The healing of two blind men near Jericho.		
Mar. 30	——	——	xix. 2–28	——	"	Christ visits Zaccheus.			Parable of the ten pounds.
A.D. 30 Ush. 33	——	——	——	xi. 55–57 xii. 1, 9–11	Bethany.	Christ arrives at Bethany six days before the Passover.			

CHAPTER IV.

CHRIST A TEACHER AND PROPHET: SCENES AND LESSONS CONNECTED WITH OUR LORD'S PERSONAL MINISTRY.

SECT. 1.—LESSONS TAUGHT IN THE EARLIER MIRACLES OF OUR LORD.

Summary of Christ's journeys.

1. AND now the character of Christ as a teacher sent from God is fully announced: He has proved His mission; He has been honored and rejected by His countrymen. On the banks of the Jordan, at Jerusalem, and throughout Samaria, He has proclaimed His message, though as yet without any extensive success. The next two years and a half of His life are devoted to the establishment of His prophetic teaching-office. Thrice in this time He makes the circuit of Galilee, preaching everywhere the Gospel of the kingdom; once He visits Jerusalem (John v. 1–47), once the coasts of Tyre and Sidon (Luke vii., viii.), and once the regions of Samaria. At the close of these labors, He goes up to Jerusalem, and thence to Peræa; and after six months more of such itineracy, He goes once again to Jerusalem immediately before He suffered.

Galilee the chief scene of His teaching.

2. It is to His labors in Galilee, however, that our attention is first called. Here He wrought most of His miracles; here He first revealed the great moral truths contained in the sermon

on the mount; and here, moreover, He spoke some of His parables, though most of them were delivered towards the close of His career. At the commencement of His ministry, His miracles and direct discourses were the chief means of His teaching.

3. It is Matthew who notices the instructive fact, that as Christ was Himself despised by His countrymen, so He selected one of the most despised localities of Palestine as the scene of His labors; and that this choice was in fulfillment of an ancient prediction. (Matt. iv. 14, 16.) The natives of this region were lightly esteemed by their Jewish neighbors; partly because of their distance from the temple, and partly also because of their frequent contact with Pagans. Here as elsewhere, however, the very debasement of the people proved their need of redemption, and enhanced its value. Sinners are nearer to the kingdom of God than the self-righteous; and so the poor Gallilean was nearer than the proud Pharisee. (Matt. ix. 13.) The theme of Christ's teaching was ever repentance and faith (Mark i. 14, 15); expressions that implied at first little more than a sense of need and guilt, together with a spirit of dependence upon the power and grace of the Messiah. For the conscious sinner, this message was of all others the most welcome.

Reasons.

4. In entering upon His work as teacher, He deemed it important to select His companions, in order that they might be eye-witnesses of His miracles, and of His resurrection, and be enabled to record what they had themselves seen and heard. Four of the eight writers of the New Testament were therefore chosen at the commencement of His ministry, and all remained with Him to its close. Simon Peter, James, John, and afterwards Matthew, were all formally invited to become His followers.

Selects His disciples.

5. This invitation was preceded by a remarkable miracle. The first three of the disciples just named were fishermen, and had been following their craft on the Lake of Tiberias—they were busy washing their nets on the shore of the lake. Through Peter's ready compliance with the request of our Lord, He had been enabled to teach the people uninterrupted by the pressure of the crowd who attended to hear Him. In return, perhaps, for this civility, our Lord bade Peter to push out into deep water, and to let down his nets for a draught; designing, as has been said, to take the fishermen in His net. To this suggestion Peter replied, that they had been all night laboring without success; but, added he, with the beginnings of no feeble faith working in him, "Nevertheless at Thy word I will let down the net." This act of faith was immediately rewarded; for "they inclosed a multitude of fishes, so that the net began to break," and the boatmen were obliged to beckon to their partners to come to their help. This miraculous act (miraculous in its knowledge) became to the fishermen the sign of a higher presence than they had yet recognized, filling them with astonishment and fear. And with other feelings, too—Peter yields freely to the impulse of the moment, and as he first saw the highest glory of his Saviour, so now he is the first to confess his own sinfulness: "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord."

The first miraculous draught of fishes.

Christ reverenced.

Peter's confession.

6. Thus it has ever been. The discovery of a Divine presence leads to conviction, and conviction to a dread of deserved wrath. In old times it was the common judgment, that none could see God and live. That feeling had existed ever since Adam had retreated from the presence of his Creator, and had hidden himself among the trees of the garden. Manoah judged that he must die, because he had seen God. Isaiah

The Divine presence has ever produced conviction of sin.

learnt and confessed the uncleanness of his lips, when he saw "the King, the Lord of Hosts." Ezekiel fell upon his face—and Daniel's beauty was changed, when he came in contact with the Divine glory. So long as men but hear of God, they deem themselves safe; but when once their eye sees Him, they either abhor themselves and repent as in dust and ashes, or in despair they cry to the rocks to cover them. It is in God's light that men see themselves and feel their guilt.

Christ receives Peter's confession; cheers and calls him.

7. Christ admits his confession, but bids him to lay aside his fear; intimating, that in the living manifestation of God in Christ, the near approach of the Holy One is not only supportable, but ever refreshing. "Fear not," says He, "for henceforth thou shalt catch men"—clothing his promise in the language of the craft with which Peter was familiar—and when they had brought the ships to land, "they forsook all and followed Him."

Everything is here significant; not the words only, but the acts. Christ had said nothing of His kingdom, and nothing of His requirements; and yet discipleship evidently involved repentance, and the abandonment both of earthly possessions and of earthly love. From the first the disciples gave up the world, and that to them perhaps was not much. They gave up worldly affections too, and that was as much to them as to ourselves.

Christ's last miracle of the draught of fishes.

8. Not unlike this early miracle was the last that Christ performed (John xxi. 1–23). Then, again, He is said to have *shown himself* to his disciples; alluding probably to His first manifestation at Cana,* and perhaps also to the invisibility of His spiritual nature; for that nature (whether as belonging to Christ or to angels) is ever said in Scripture to *appear* to man, and

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* John ii. 11. ἐφανέρωσε.

Close resemblance between the two.

often to be withdrawn. At this last manifestation, three at least of the same apostles were present, and probably the whole. Here also there had been a night of fruitless toil, and already perhaps the dim feeling had arisen in their minds, that this second night was a spiritual counterpart of the first; but the feeling must have been dim, or they would earlier have recognized the voice and the looks of their Friend. At early dawn He stood by the shore, and with friendly interest in the result of their labors, asked after their success. They answer, they have taken nothing—Christ's power requiring, even in natural things, that a confession of poverty precede the bestowment of His gifts. "Cast the net," said He, "on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes."

And this was enough. One disciple, at least, has discovered his Lord; and Peter, to whom John communicated his discovery, unable to wait until the ship reached the land, throws himself into the sea that he may find himself the sooner at his Master's feet.

How beautiful do both apostles come out here in their proper characters. It was love in the person of John that first detected the presence of Christ, and it was courage and energy in Peter that first reached him. When the disciples gained the shore, they found a fire kindled, with fish laid upon it (whether by earthly or by miraculous ministration we are not told), and they were bidden by our Lord to bring the fish they had taken (an hundred and fifty and three), and to unite in a common meal. Numerous as the fish were, and all of them large, yet, it is added, was not the net broken.

Significance of these miracles.

9. If the first miraculous draught of fishes suggested to the apostles of our Lord their appropriate office, and its earthly results, this last miracle

suggests no less strongly the glorious ingathering of the nations into the kingdom of the Father. There some of the fish were lost; here all are secured. There the number is not told us, and those that were taken were both good and bad; here everything is fixed, and the fish that were taken were all preserved. Here, moreover, the toil ends in a meal of the Lord's preparing, and symbolical perhaps of the great festival in heaven with which he will refresh his servants, when they sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God.

Again, awe and fear are shed upon the hearts of the disciples by His presence, for their love is yet imperfect, and none of them durst give utterance to any feeling of doubt, or ask for further manifestations of grace, "for they knew that it was the Lord."

Healing of the demoniac in the synagogue.

19. The scene is again changed, and we enter the synagogue of the town of Capernaum. Christ is here before us, and it is the Sabbath. As was His custom, He had come up to worship, and was engaged in teaching the people. They are astonished at the authority with which He speaks, and He is about to show Himself mighty not in words only, but in deeds. An opportunity is here to be offered of making yet deeper impressions of His power, and of showing His authority over a domain which no human arm had yet entered. There was in the synagogue a man with an unclean spirit. Hitherto Christ had ruled in nature—changing the water and healing disease; now He is to prove that even the spirits obey Him.

The demon who occupied the person of this poor man, felt, as soon as Christ entered the place, that now he was near one who was stronger than all; and hoping to avoid an attack by a hasty expression of inferiority, he cried out: "Let us alone, what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art thou come to destroy us? I know who thou art, the Holy One of God." The earth had not yet received her King, but heaven and hell had both borne witness to him. "The devils believe and tremble."

Such testimony, however, was likely to bring truth itself into suspicion, and Christ therefore rebuked him, saying: "Hold thy peace and come out of him;" addressing the unclean spirit on His own authority and in His own name. The spirit at once obeyed the call, and having torn the man, though without doing him permanent mischief, he came out; teaching us here, as we are taught elsewhere (Mark ix. 26), that Satan torments most those whom he is compelled to resign.

Result on the minds of the people.

11. The precise nature of the fearful affliction which was here relieved, will be noticed hereafter. It is enough now to remark that the result of this miracle was unmixed astonishment: "What word," said they, "is this; for with authority and power He commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out."

Connection between these cures and the sufferings of our Lord.

12. On the same day our Lord healed the mother of Peter's wife, and in the evening crowds of sick people visited or were brought to Him, and He healed them all. "The devils also came out of many, crying out and saying, Thou art the Christ;" to which record Matthew adds the remark that these miracles were all in fulfillment of the ancient prophecies: "Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses;" intimating (as St. Peter explains) not so much that he relieved them, nor merely that in relieving them He exhausted His own nature; but also that He stooped and came under the conditions of which those outward sicknesses were but the external sign. The sins they represented were laid upon Him; and in bearing the mortal life which included them, and the guilt which caused them, He bore them in their curse and significancy for ever away.

13. The next two miracles of our Lord add yet more to our knowledge of His power and mission. Whether they really occupied the place in His ministry which we assign them, is somewhat uncertain; but they were clearly at the commencement of it, and are both highly instructive. The first was the cure of the leper, and the second of the paralytic. The disease of the first sufferer had spread over his whole body, and he was leprous from head to foot. This leprosy was undoubtedly the most fearful disease known in the East, and was doubly fearful under the Jewish law. It was the type of moral pollution. All sickness, indeed, was more or less indicative of a tainted nature; but this was the chosen symbol of it. It was in itself a living death; a dissolution by degrees, limb after limb, of the whole frame. It was, moreover, incurable by human art, and was regarded as a direct infliction from God, by whose power alone it could be healed. (2 Kings v. 7.) Hence it was that the leper bearing about, as he did, the visible token of sin in his soul, was treated everywhere as a great sinner—as one in whom sin had reached its highest manifestation, himself polluted, and polluting all he touched. He went covered in garments of mourning, as if lamenting his own decease; his clothes rent, his head bare, his lip unshaven, himself and all that pertained to him unclean. The disease itself the Jews called "the finger of God," and emphatically, "the stroke." To heal it was one of the most decisive evidences of Messiahship. "The lepers," said our Lord, "are cleansed," and on such maladies he delighted to exercise His power and love.

Healing of the leper.

In this case the leper comes manifesting his faith, bowing and worshiping (though the terms of themselves do not imply a recognition of any thing specially divine). He asks healing. He acknowledges Christ's power, and leaves the result to His pity and wisdom. "If Thou wilt," says he, "Thou canst make me clean." An appeal which showed a heart open to Divine influence, and readily receptive of it. Thereupon Christ "put forth His hand and said, I will; be thou clean, and immediately his leprosy was cleansed."

Christ's injunctions on the occasion.

Their meaning.

14. A double injunction followed this cure. He first commanded to tell no man; and then bade him go and show himself to the priests, and offer the gifts appointed by the law. (Lev. xiv. 2.) The first command has several parallels in the Gospels; (Matt. ix. 30; xii. 16; xvi. 20; xvii. 9; Mark iii, 12; v. 43; vii. 36; viii. 13, 26; ix. 9; Luke viii. 56; ix. 21;)" and it is probable that it was prompted by different reasons on different occasions. Sometimes it was intended to prevent popular tumult, and a public effort of the people to take and make Him a king; a result that would have frustrated the great end of His life. Sometimes, as Luther suggests, it was meant to set an example of humility; and often, perhaps, (for the command is given to the man healed, and not to the multitudes who witness the miracles,) to secure the spiritual profit of the sufferer. Very occasionally, our Lord ordered the person healed to a sphere of external activity; (Mark v. 19;) but generally He enforced quietness and retirement, seeking, doubtless, in each case, the prosperity of the inward life. In this particular instance the precept was neglected, (without sin, perhaps, for Christ might mean that he was first of all to tell the priests, and then that he should be free to tell it to others too,) and, in consequence, Christ was unable to enter into the city openly, (Mark i. 45,) that is, without offering some gratification to the earthly and selfish hopes of the people. There is clearly a kind of popularity, quite as unfavorable to the diffusion of truth, as concealment itself. The second precept is also instructive. He implied by it, that the institutions of the

law were to be observed, and that not even the shadow was to be removed, till He had established the substance in its room. "Go show thyself for a testimony unto them, a proof that thou art healed, that thou mayest be admitted again into the congregation of Israel, and that the priests themselves may have an evidence of my power, and the unreasonableness of their unbelief."

Healing of the paralytic; Christ avowedly forgives sin.

14. The scene again changes. Christ has entered the court of some friendly dwelling, and multitudes crowded around to hear Him. Pharisees and doctors of the law are present from the distant parts of Galilee, and from Jerusalem itself; nor is there room to receive them—"no not so much as about the door. The occasion was evidently important, and the truth which Christ had taught in His previous miracle by implication, He resolves to teach plainly in this. A poor paralytic, whose friends could not come near for the press, is carried by them to the roof of the house, (by the steps against the outside wall of the building,) and is let down before the Lord. This manifestation of faith was novel, and it was inconvenient, for Christ was teaching at the time; but He condescends to our need, and ever welcomes our faith. Seeing their faith, therefore—at once theirs and the poor man's—He addressed him, "Son, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee." No word had been spoken, no petition presented; but Christ loves to do above what we ask. He saw, no doubt, the man's heart, and the deep sense of sinfulness that was excited there; and, adapting His message to his case, gave him the assurance, not of healing, but of pardon.

The thoughts of the Pharisees, and our Lord's reply.

Here is a new claim. "This man," said the Pharisees in their thoughts, "blasphemeth; pretending to exercise a power which belongs only to God." And here again is a new miracle. Perceiving in His spirit what thoughts were stirring in their breasts, Christ at once repels them; giving, in the vindication of His language, an evidence of His divinity, "for the thoughts of the hearts of men are open only to God. (1 Sam. xvi. 7; 1 Chron. xxviii. 9; Jer. xvii. 10.) He even indicates the line of argument which, in their thoughts, they had taken. "You suppose," His answer implies, "that my command is powerless—a blasphemous intention, but without result; its issues are in a world concealed from your view. It is easy to say, 'thy sins be forgiven thee,' but to say 'be healed,' would be a surer test of the divinity of my mission. I will fulfill your implied demand. You ask an outward sign of the communication of inward grace—a proof within the cognizance of your senses of miraculous power; and that proof I will supply. That ye may know that the Son of Man hath power to forgive sins, I will now utter the harder *saying*, 'Arise, take up thy bed, and walk.' And immediately he arose, took up his bed, and went forth before them all."

How the Pharisees felt or thought on witnessing this miracle, we are not told; but the people, far less hardened against the truth, were all amazed, and glorified God.

Healing sometimes connected with forgiveness, sometimes preparatory to it.

16. Ordinarily the miracles of Christ were miracles rather of healing, than of forgiveness. There are some other instances, however, in addition to the one now under consideration; and in these, as well as by other passages of Scripture, this power of Christ is confirmed (Luke xvii. 19; John v. 14). It is probable that in many instances bodily healing prepared men to receive these better blessings of which it was the appropriate sign. Here, at least, it is clearly shown that Christ had the power to bestow the greater gift, and that the straitening was not in Him, but in the narrow contracted views of those who applied for healing. The greater faith of this applicant, though itself a gift, was counted worthy of the richer reward.

Healing of the infirm man at Jerusalem.

17. This act of forgiveness prepares the way for even a more remarkable development of the true character of our Lord. The Pharisees whom he had met at Capernaum had returned to Jerusalem, and Christ himself has gone up to the feast. (John v. 1–4.) In the neighborhood of the pool of Bethesda (the upper fountain probably of the pool of Siloam) a great multitude of impotent folk lay. One of these poor sufferers, who had been thirty and eight years "in that case," Christ addressed; seeking first to excite hope in the breast that must by this time have often yielded to desponding feeling. "Wilt thou," said He, "be made whole?" The man was thus led to trust the love of the questioner in order that he might ultimately trust His power; and Christ is thus seen awakening the faith which in a few moments He will demand. "Most gladly," is the spirit of the reply; "my infirmity is no consequence of unwillingness, only when the water has its healing power I have no man to put me into the pool, and while I am entering another steppeth down before me." But now the long years of disappointed expectation are at an end. Jesus saith unto him: "Rise, and take up thy bed and walk;" and the man, believing that power went forth with the word, was immediately made whole, and took up his bed and walked.

Christ claims power to work as God works, continually.

18. The same day, however, was the Sabbath—the day sacred to worship and rest. The Jews therefore, that is, the spiritual heads of the nation,* found fault with the man for carrying his bed on that day. Doubtless the act might seem to be forbidden by the letter of the ancient law; but really it was part

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* So John generally employs this phrase. John i. 19; vii. 1; xviii. 12, 14.

of the healing, and was included therefore among those acts which (as Christ tells us elsewhere) it may be sinful to leave undone. (Luke vi. 9.) In His next miracle indeed our Lord took this ground, and showed that forms must ever yield to the life; and that as "the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath"—He Himself as Lord of man, and still more therefore of the Sabbath too, has power to alter its requirements as He will. Here, however, He takes even higher ground, affirming that in this act He kept the Sabbath—kept it, that is, with the highest beneficent activity, which in His case, as in His Father's, was identical with the holiest rest. The quietism of the Sabbath is confined, He implies, to beings framed like you, ever in danger of losing the full repose of your nature amid the multitude of earthly toils; but with Me and My Father rest and activity are one.

His beneficent activity is the holiest rest.

19. This defence exasperates His adversaries the more. He is now in their esteem not only a Sabbath-breaker, but a blasphemer, for He makes Himself equal with God. So far from denying this charge, Christ confirms it with the most emphatic protestation. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee." (ver. 19.) He asserts the complete unity of operation between the Father and Himself; first denying all action of His own independently of God, and then affirming positively that his acts are also the acts of God. As an evidence of this oneness, He appeals to His quickening power, for He giveth life in all senses (see chap. i. sec. 3), to whomsoever He will, then to His office as Judge, and then to His consequent dignity. Now, says He, God will be worshiped and adored in me; all therefore must honor the Son even as they honor the Father; and all who dishonor the Son shall be condemned.

Asserts his identity with the Father, and claims equal honor.

Evidence in proof of this assertion.

20. In proof of the truth of the claims He calls in the testimony of John His forerunner, reminds them of the voice that was heard at His baptism, of the mighty works which He had Himself performed, of their own Scriptures, and lastly, of the witness of their ancient prophet, Moses. "For he," adds He, "wrote of me." (John v. 31–46.) The unbelief of His hearers He ascribes distinctly to their denial of the teaching of Moses—who had spoken of a prophet to be raised up like unto Himself—and especially to the fact that they had not Christ's words remaining in them. Sin and selfishness, their preference of the falsehood that exalted them, to the truth that laid them low (vers. 39–44), had diminished their susceptibility of religious impression. They loved not God, and were obstinately bent on rejecting their Teacher, and therefore both himself and His message were disowned.

The revelation of Christ's personal character complete.

21. And now the revelation of Christ's personal character seems complete. He has been recognized by the Father. Even unclean spirits have owned Him. He heals diseases, exhausts Himself with days of weariness and toil, manifesting wherever He goes His power and love. He forgives sin. He substitutes for the shadowy observances of the Mosaic economy, what He as lawgiver pronounced to be substantial obedience; and now he claims distinctly the functions of God, identity with the Father, together with the honor and responsibilities which belonged exclusively to Him.

SECT. 2.—THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT. CHRIST THE FULFILLMENT OF THE LAW IN MORALITY AND IN DOCTRINE.

Christ's holiness and dignity maintained by prayer.

22. How Christ *as man* maintained the holiness and dignity of His position, is an interesting question. Contact with the world must have tended to ruffle the tranquility of His feelings; and

certainly that contact was more frequent and harassing than anything His disciples afterwards knew. We find Him now in Galilee and now in Jerusalem, walking several times in the course of a few years over nearly the whole of Palestine, and even when residing in Capernaum surrounded with crowds of hearers. He seems to have lived in public rather than alone.

It is certain, hovever, that this activity was sustained by meditation and prayer. It was thus he prepared at first for His work; and soon after the disclosures mentioned in the previous section, we find him spending the whole night in prayer; an occupation that formed a fitting close to His labors in Jerusalem, and as fitting an introduction to the selection of His apostles, and the delivery of the Sermon on the Mount. The fact of this prayer is mentioned only by Luke (Luke vi.), though on other occasions a similar fact is recorded by other evangelists.

Herein our example.

23. Thus it is that our Lord's was an angelical life (as Leighton calls it), devoted both to contemplation and to activity. And we need in this respect to copy him. Contemplation we require, that our troubled spirits may be quieted; that truth may produce its appropriate impression upon our hearts; and then activity, that we may spend the strength gained by prayer in beneficent consecration. True piety ought ever to be energetic and practical; it ought also to be meditative and secluded. Days spent among the multitude need nights of calmness and devotion. (Matt. xiv. 23; Luke vi. 12.)

Sermon on the Mount: where delivered.

25. After this solemn preparation, Christ selected twelve of His disciples and constituted them apostles. Having descended from the mountain where He had prayed for and chosen them, He went up to an extended plain in (τὸ ὄρος) the mountain district of Capernaum, (see Luke compared with Matthew,) and in the presence of His disciples and of a large multitude

of people, He proceeded to give what may be considered as a delineation of the moral law of Christianity, considered both in itself and its connection with the previous dispensation.

Object of this sermon.

Throughout this discourse He seems to have a double object in view—first to correct the misinterpretation of the precepts of the law by Jewish teachers, and then to unfold and develope in its utmost depth the spirit of the old economy; indicating, moreover, the application of its principles, not only to the Jews, but to the whole of the human race.

Christ the fulfillment of the law.

25. But this last statement makes it necessary that we should retrace our steps. Christ is Himself the fulfillment and completion (πληρωσις) of the law. If that ancient economy be regarded as an outline, Christ in His office and ministry is the reality it represented. If it be regarded as the type, He is the substance. The type itself therefore we must study—not independently, but in its connection with the antitype, in order that we may understand the full significance of both. The truth, therefore, we mean to illustrate is, that the Gospel in all its parts is the completion of a gradual and progressive revelation.

What meant by a progressive development of truth.

26. The truths and purpose of God are in themselves incapable of either progress or change; but the revelation of those truths is capable of both. Apart from divine teaching, the whole world of religious truth is shrouded in darkness; but the sun of revelation rises, and ever as it rises the mists are scattered, and there is brought out first one prominence and then another, till every hill and valley is bathed in splendor. The landscape was there before, but it was not seen. The development is not of new creations, spreading as the light extends; it is development of light only, showing, and not forming, the beauty it reveals.

Examples as to God the Father.

37. From the first God taught the unity of the Divine nature, but that there was a plurality in the Godhead was but indistinctly disclosed. Several expressions in the very earliest books imply,* and are evidently calculated to suggest it. In the later prophets the truth comes out with greater distinctness; but it is in the New Testament only that it is revealed.

The Holy Spirit.

So also the work of the Holy Spirit is recognized in the Old Testament, and with increasing clearness as we approach the times of the Gospel. It is in the New alone, however, that we have a full view of His character and work.

Especially true of the work of Christ.

28. This gradual disclosure of the Divine will is still more remarkable in the case of our Lord. The first promise contains a prophetic declaration of mercy. It foretold His coming and work, though in mysterious terms. The first act of acceptable worship was a type, expressing by an action the faith of the offerer in the fulfillment of the first prediction. There was to be triumph through suffering, and there was to be the substitution of the innocent for the guilty.

These promises and types were multiplied with the lapse of time. In the person or worship of Enoch, of Noah, of Melchisedeck, and of Job, there was much that was typical or predictive, and still more in the history of Abraham and his immediate descendants.

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* The first set of expressions which clearly suggest a plurality of persons in the Godhead, include all those in which "the Angel of the Lord" has applied to Him the incommunicable name of Jehovah, or in which He speaks in His own name; Gen xvi. 7. and ver. 13. Similar expressions may be found in Gen. xxii. 11—18; xxxiii. 11—13; xxxii. 28—30; Hosea xii. 4,5; Ex. iii. 2—15; xix. 19, 20; xx. 1; xxiii. 20, 21; compared with Acts vii. 38; Jos. v. 13—15; vi. 2; Isa. lxiii. 8, 9; Mal. iii. 1.

Another set of expressions includes such as these—"Let us make man in our own image," and the use of the plural noun to indicate the true God, with a singular verb. Gen. i. 1; Ps. lviii. 12 (Heb.); Prov. ix. 10 (Heb.); &c.

The third set includes such passages as Num. vi. 22—27; Isa. vi. 3—8; Isa. xlviii. 16; Jer. xxiii. 5, 6, 7.

Under the Mosaic dispensation other typical persons, and places, and things were instituted, and the design of these institutions was more distinctly explained.

Between the days of Samuel and Malachi, a period of six hundred years, a succession of prophets were sent, who gradually set forth the person and work of the Messiah. They foretell, too, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the general prevalence of the truth.

In the EXTENT of their predictions the prophets have not gone beyond the first promise, which was intended to give hope of a COMPLETE redemption. But in their clearness in the detailed account they give of what redemption involved, and of what it cost, the difference is most marked; while in the same qualities the Gospel has gone at least as far beyond the prophets as the prophets had gone beyond the law.

So of practical holiness.

29. It is noticeable, too, that the predictions of the Old Testament and its practical doctrines go hand in hand. The revelation spreads on each point. The light that illuminates the living spring or the harvest field of truth, shows with equal clearness the way that leads to them. The law gives divine precept with greater clearness than previous dispensations; and the prophets go beyond the law, occupying a middle place between it and the Gospel. They insist more fully on personal holiness as distinguished from national and ceremonial purity, and their sanctions have less reference to temporal promises. The law had said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart," and the extent of this precept nothing could exceed. The prophets expound, and enforce, and animate it with a new spirit, and direct its application to greater holiness. The rule of life becomes in their hands increasingly luminous and practical.

The illustrations. The nature of holiness, how taught.

30. This gradual development of the truth may be illustrated from the law and the Gospel. Mark, for example, how under the ancient economy, the idea of the holiness of God was revealed. The heathen nations have no word which properly represents this attribute, and to the Jews it needed to be suggested by a special institution. In preparation for this arrangement, all animals were divided from the first into clean and unclean. From the clean, one was afterwards chosen without spot or blemish; a peculiar tribe, selected from the other tribes, was appointed to present it, the offering being first washed with pure water, and the priest himself undergoing a similar ablution. Neither priest nor victim, however, much less the offerer, was deemed sufficiently holy to come into the Divine presence; but the offering was made without the holy place. The idea of the infinite purity of God was thus suggested to the minds of observers; and holiness in things created came to mean, under the law, purification for sacred uses. Under the Gospel it has higher significance, and is taught by an infinitely holier sacrifice. Now it involves freedom from sin, and the possession by spiritual intelligences "of a Divine nature."

The guilt of sin, how taught under the Law and under the Gospel.

The demerit of sin, and the doctrine of an atonement, were taught in words taken from an equally instructive rite, though still imperfectly. The victim was slain, and its blood, which was the LIFE, sprinkled upon the mercy-seat and towards the holy place, the abode of the Invisible King; and while the people prayed in the outer court, they beheld the dark volume of smoke ascending from the sacrifice which was burning in their stead. How mysteriously, yet plainly, did this suggest that God's justice was a consuming fire, and that the souls of the people escaped through a vicarious atonement!

The moral lesson, it will be noticed, of both these examples, is identical with the teaching of the Gospel; but how much clearer and fuller are the statements of the second economy than those of the first. And if we compare these two revelations with an intermediate one—for example the 53rd chapter of Isaiah, where the Great Victim is represented as God's servant, and as Himself dying for the iniquity of the people, and as making intercession for transgressors, the gradual development appears plain. What was ritual at first is here mysteriously linked with some human sufferer; but who he is, and who are to profit by his sufferings, are questions unsolved till we turn to the Gospel, and there we find that both predictions, the type and the prophecy, are fulfilled and completed in the cross.

If we compare the precepts of the Pentateuch on repentance, with those of the prophets on the same duty,* or the statements of both, on the relation between the Jews, or the world generally, and Him who came to enlighten the Gentiles as well as His people Israel; or mark the increasing clearness and spirituality of the whole horizon of spiritual truth as the dawn of the Gospel-day drew on, we shall not fail to be struck with the consistency and yet gradual development of the whole. Throughout there will be found evidences of the presence of that God who, as Bishop Butler expresses it, appears "deliberate in all His operations," and who accomplishes his ends by slow and successive stages, whether they refer to the changes of the seasons, the movements of providence, or the more formal disclosures of His will.†

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* Deut. xxx. 1—6; Ez. xviii.; Isa. lvii. 15, 16; Ps. li.

† Sometimes this gradual development of truth is spoken of as successive dispensations—the Adamic, the Patriarchal, the Mosaic, and the Christian. Dispensation meaning in this connection the way in which God deals with man. The Adamic continued only during man's innocency; the Patriarchal lasted 2,500 years; (Gen. iii.; Ex. xx.;) the

Development ceases with the Gospel.

31. With the books of the Gospel, however, (it must be added,) the development of the Evangelical truth (so far as the present state is concerned) ends. There may be passages in the Bible whose full meaning is not yet discovered, and which are perhaps "reserved," as Boyle expressed it, "to quell some future heresy, or solve some yet unformed doubt, or confound some error that hath not yet a name," or proved, by fresh prophetic evidence, that it came from God; but we are to look for no further revelation, nor are we to regard as developments of Scripture doctrine the additions or expositions of men. The gradual development of truth in Scripture is one thing; accretions that overlay that truth is another; and it is for the first only that we contend.

Two practical conclusions.

32. Two practical conclusions may be gathered from these facts, in addition to the great lessons for which they are here adduced.

Revelation one and indivisible.

First. The Bible must be regarded, not as a series of distinct revelations, but as one and indivisible. Doctrines clearly revealed in the New Testament depend for many of their evidences, and yet more for their illustrations, on the Old. The one dispensation is the completion of the other. The first is the type, or the early figure; the second, the heavenly reality. The nature of the "good things to come" may be learned both from the shadow and from the things themselves.

Truths common to both dispensations.

Hence, *secondly*, we have an important test of truth, and of the relative value of truth. If it be said, for example, that the sacrifice and priesthood of Christ are not revealed in the Gospel, or their subordinate truths, we look to the law; and if it be maintained that there is now no priesthood and no sacri-

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Mosaic 1,500 more. The Patriarchal contains many of the first principles of the Mosaic, in sacrifice and circumcision, for example, as do both dispensations of the Gospel.

fice, either we have a series of shadowy observances without reference or meaning; the blood, the altar, the holy place, the propitiatory intercession, are all types of nothing; and the previous economy is robbed of all its significance; or if it be supposed that the earlier dispensation is abolished, the substitution of the Gospel in its place implies a change in the very principles of the Divine government. Under that dispensation law was inexorable; now it is yielding and remiss. Then repentance alone was powerless to save; now it is mighty and efficacious. At first, man was pardoned through an atonement; at least, by prerogative. As it is, the mystery is solved. Revelation is a consistent whole; the doctrines of the later manifestations unfold their meaning when studied amidst the patterns of the earlier; and each dispensation is strengthened by its agreement with the other.

Senses in which Christ fulfills the law.

33. The object of these remarks, however, is chiefly to explain our Lord's relation to previous dispensations. As they were typical, He came to *complete* them (πληρῶσαι); putting the substance in the place of the shadow. As they were predictive, He *fulfills* them. As they inculcate precepts and truths in relation to God and man, he *develops and explains* them; giving them a clearer, wider, and more spiritual application to the various duties of human life, and making them and Himself a full and perfect revelation of the will and character of His Father.

Scene amid which the Sermon was delivered.

34. With the view of commencing this fuller revelation, our Saviour now addressed His disciples and the multitude. They were assembled in the early morning (Luke vi. 13), amidst some of the finest scenery in the world, under an oriental sky, to listen to words such as were never before uttered on earth. God spake to Moses and to the Israelites in Sinai with a voice so terrible, that the people desired to hear it no

more; and even Moses said, "I exceedingly fear and quake;" but Christ spoke with meekness and love, in tones and amid scenes which were in beautiful harmony with the truths He came to reveal. "The law came by Moses, but grace and truth by Jesus Christ."

Spoken by no common teacher.

35. The people were evidently gathered together with curious excited feeling. Many of them had witnessed His miracles; some saw in Him the promised Messiah; others, at the least, a teacher from God. The character of the sermon, and the phrases employed, plainly indicate that more than a common teacher was speaking; and at its close His hearers acknowledged, that this was also their impression; for He taught, said they, "as one having authority, and not as the scribes." (Matt. vii. 29.)

Expectation of his hearers.

Most of His hearers, it is probable, had the common expectation of their nation. They looked for a temporal deliverer, hoped for the establishment of a temporal kingdom, and counted as a matter of course on their admission to all its immunities.

First peculiarity of our Saviour's doctrine.

36. At the very outset of His discourse Christ comes into collision with all these carnal expectations. The nature of His kingdom and the character of its members are at once revealed. He announces Himself not as a judge of the heathen, nor as an avenger of the wrongs of His country; but as the bestower of spiritual blessings, and that upon those only who had no hope in themselves. (Matt. v. 3–11.) He formally blesses those who are poor in spirit, who are conscious of their spiritual poverty, and then those who under the influence of this feeling have a deep sense of guilt and imperfection. This disposition, again, gives rise in them to a spirit of humble meekness; to a strong desire after righteousness. In proportion as this desire is fulfilled and they obtain forgiveness, there springs up a compassionate

love for others; they endeavor to impart to their brethren the peace which they themselves enjoy. The world, however, misunderstands their aims, and dislikes what they are seeking to diffuse. They are therefore reviled and persecuted; and for this condition, too, a special blessing is reserved.

To each of these classes Christ makes a promise of grace and love proportioned to the character of the receiver. To the poor is given the possession of a kingdom; to the mourner, comfort; to the suffering meek, lordship and domion; to the hungry, the supply of their wants; to the merciful, mercy; to those whose hearts are pure, the vision of God; and to the promoters of peace, the recognition of their resemblance to him.

These promises are interwoven, it may be observed, with quotations from ancient predictions, explaining, appropriating, and fulfilling them all.

The promised blessedness not intended to take men from duty.

After this introduction, which is common to both Matthew and Luke, our Lord proceeds to state His relation to the Law. He first intimates, however, that the blessedness He had announced to his disciples was not intended to justify any abandonment of the world. "Ye are," says He, "the salt of the earth, and the light of the world." As if He had said: "Ye are a noble and indispensable element in this lower state; the image and means of its purity, the secret of its preservation, especially as through you the Spirit of God will exercise his enlightening, quickening, and consecrating power. What salt is in the covenant—what it is in preserving from decay, in seasoning and purifying acceptable sacrifice—what light is to a darkened and guilty world—such are ye The kingdom *is* yours—by and by ye shall enter it—but now I leave you to your work, and after work will come your reward. He that *endureth to the end*, the same shall be saved."

Christ's relation to the law.

37. Then follows (in Matthew only, as is most fitting) a disclosure of his relation to the Law. "I am come," says He, "to give you a deeper insight into its requirements, and therefore to exhibit a noble and perfect performance of them. (Matt. v. 17, 18.) Nor let it be supposed that mine is a revelation unknown to the ancient prophets. It is, on the contrary, the fulfillment of their predictions and of the law itself. If that law be regarded as a collection of moral precepts, I appear to disclose their depth, to yield them in myself complete satisfaction, and afterwards to show to my church in its practical holiness the fullness of all that purity which they demand. If it be regarded as a collection of ritual institutes, I appear to achieve the great sacrifice of my own oblation, and then to secure to my church in its holy consecration the realized spirit of the ancient theocracy, that all my disciples may become kings and priests unto God." That all this fullness of meaning was in the mind of our blessed Lord, is plain; for He contemplates the fulfillment of the law as extending into the distant future, and as reaching in fact to the end of time. "Heaven and earth," says He, "shall pass away; but the law shall not pass away till all be fulfilled." Most of what was ceremonial ended in Him. What was spiritual and moral is to be embodied by His grace and power in His church.

Rules for interpreting Christ's exposition of the Law.

38. In studying the following verses (21–48), there are two rules laid down by the commentators, of great importance.* The sayings of our Lord herein are all to be regarded as expressing the spiritual sense of the Old Testament commands; and His explanations (with His moral precepts generally) must themselves be interpreted in His spirit.

Illustrated.

The first rule Luther has well illustrated in his commentary on the passage: "Mark," says he,

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* Tholuck.

"how Christ takes up the command. Ye have heard from the Pharisee how Moses ordained, and how, from ancient times, it has been said, 'Thou shalt not kill;' and on that account you flatter yourselves as persons diligent in studying and practising God's commands as they have learned them from his own prophet. You build upon and boast of it, that it is Moses who tells you, 'Thou shalt not kill;' you stop short, however, at the letter, and will let it have no other than the plain meaning the sound conveys; and thus you darken the words with your crude assertions and corrupt glosses, so that it is impossible to see what they imply or express. But do you suppose He speaks merely of your hand when he says, 'Thou shalt not kill?' What then dost THOU mean? It implies not simply the hand, the foot, or tongue, or any other single member, but all that thou art in body and in soul. He addresses himself not to the hand, but to the whole person. Hence it is that 'Thou shalt not kill,' expresses as much as if he had said: Whatever members you have, and however you may kill—whether by hand, or tongue, or heart, or gesture—whether you look fiercely and refuse with your eyes to let your neighbor live, or whether you mean with your ears to kill, and hate to hear him praised, all is condemned; for then is your heart and all within you so disposed as to wish him dead. Though, therefore, the hand be motionless, and the tongue silent; and though eyes and ears refrain, still may the heart be full of murder and blood."*

So also must we interpret the language of our Lord in the spirit in which it was spoken. He speaks broadly and impressively, reckoning upon the candor and common sense of His hearers to apply His truth: "Whosoever shall say to his brother, 'Thou fool,' shall be in danger of hell-fire;" and yet sin is folly, and the sinner is really a fool.

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* From Luther, slightly abridged.

And is this language always forbidden? No; our common sense and the spirit of our Master teach the exception. "If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out." Shall the members suffer for the unholy desires of the heart? No; but common sense and the spirit show us the meaning; better lose an object as dear as the eye than risk your soul. "Let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay; for what is more than this cometh of evil." Is then every oath forbidden? Nay, but it is elsewhere said to be an end of strife. God, and our Lord, and His Apostles, have all appealed (as the oath does) to God in confirmation of their statements. Again, the spirit limits the precept and shows the meaning.

So of our Lord's teaching generally.

Let it be remembered, moreover, that in all the teaching of our Lord there is much that is figurative. A happy figure is, as Augustine expressed it, "little to the little, and great to the great;" intelligible to the child, and when received into the mind, is like a seed, which, through the fructifying influence of thought and meditation, casts off the husk and becomes a tree. It is something addressed to all men, and to all parts of men; fancy, wit, intellect, and feeling, only it must be interpreted with care. So the following are to be interpreted; "Whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also;" "Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth;" "When thou fastest anoint thy head and wash thy face;" "Let the dead bury the dead;" "Salute no man by the way." Expressions that have a beautiful spiritual meaning, but not all the meaning which the figures may seem to imply. After all the pains which may be taken, however, to reach the full sense of the teaching of our Lord, it will remain a question whether we have seen down into the depth of His meaning. His words are ever like the deep sea, intensely clear, but immeasurably profound.

39. His morality, as between man and man, is summed up in two forms; in each case in a single precept. The first is, "copy God;" "Be ye perfect even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (v. 48); and the second, which is, perhaps, more direct and practical in its application, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them" (vii. 12).

Morality of the Gospel.

40 Our Lord then proceeds to expose and correct prevalent opinions or practices in relation to religious duty. All ostentation He absolutely condemns; whether in alms-giving, in fasting, or in prayer. Prayer itself He explains and illustrates. The besetting sin of our nature, the eager desire of earthly treasures, He rebukes (Matt vi. 1–24) for a threefold reason; the treasure itself is perishable—the pursuit of such treasure as our great aim, is a perversion of our powers; and if it be pursued, it must be at the cost of heaven; for no man can serve Mammon and God.

His precepts in relation to religious duty.

The love of the world.

Having cautioned His hearers against this tendency, He further forbids all anxious feeling in relation even to subsistence. Distract not your minds with the question what ye shall eat, or wherewithal ye shall be clothed; your anxiety is useless (v. 27). It is heathenish (v. 32). It is a denial of the love, or an invasion of the province of God (v. 32). Spend your energies, therefore, on duty temporal and spiritual, and leave the issues of your diligence with Him (v. 33).

Anxious care.

After these general precepts, He goes on to condemn the spirit of harsh and uncharitable judgment in which His hearers were especially prone to indulge, and bids them direct their attention chiefly to the correction of their own faults. "When these are removed, it will be time enough to examine and censure your neighbors." (Matt. vii. 1–5.)

Uncharitable judgments.

41. These precepts seem to have produced a double impression. Some sneered and others were humbled. The first class He rebuked (vii. 6), and the second He cheered, leading their thoughts to the sufficiency of Divine grace, and presenting encouragement to confiding and affectionate prayer (v. 7–11).

Results on different classes of hearers.

His discourse is closed with a brief description of the different paths He and His hearers had been considering—obedience ending in life, disobedience in death (vii. 14). To the one termination, He tells them they can be led only through a narrow gate, and by a narrow way; to the other the way is broad, easy, and plain Some, He intimates, may attempt to combine the guilty indulgences of the broad road, with a claim to religious influence, and a heavenly reward. The attempt, however, our Lord repudiates, and teaches all to repudiate it too. "By their fruits ye shall know them" (v. 20). Their end, He tells His hearers, will not differ from their course; and that course will at length appear to be as foolish and disastrous as it is inconsiderate and sinful (v. 26).

End of the different courses pursued by them.

42. Never was morality revealed so humbling, so ennobling, so spiritual. It makes the character of God our model, and the grace of God our encouragement. It brings us at once into contact with Him, and the blessed result is a nobleness and reality of holiness, as far removed from bitterness and hypocrisy, as it is from selfishness and pride.

General character of this morality.

43. These truths appear and re-appear during the ministry of our Lord, sometimes with ample illustration, and sometimes in new and instructive connections, but the substance is not changed. What is here said may be said more at length, but more than this, it seems hardly possible to say. These other passages, however, may all be examined with instruction and advantage

Its lessons repeated.

Humility, &c.

The forbearance, and humility, and love, which form the groundwork of all inward religion, are repeatedly enforced by our Lord, and often with touching emphasis, as in Matt. xviii. 1–35, and the parallel passages; again in Luke xvii. 1–10; and again in Mark x, 1, 3–16. The grace of humility is indeed expressly commended and illustrated on no less than seven different occasions.

Ambition, &c.

The contrary vices of ambition and contention are pointedly rebuked in Matt. xx. 20–28, and in Luke xxii. 24–30; Christ reminding His disciples in the last passage, that the chief distinction among them is to consist in a larger share of service, and in more exhausting toils; "for whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant." These precepts He enforced by His own example, and illustrated from the spirit of little children, whom He took and set in the midst.

Persecutions.

But though this is the true spirit of His gospel, and His disciples were to be sustained in cherishing it, He warns them that men will resent their efforts, reject their message, and visit them with bitter persecution, such as He Himself encountered, (Matt. x. 16; xvi. 24–27; Luke xiii. 26–35; xxi. 12–19; John xv. 18–27; xvi. 33,) assuring His disciples in several of these passages, that they are to be conformed to His sufferings, (though in an infinitely lower sense,) and that, having suffered with Him, they shall also be partakers of His glory.

The spirituality and comprehensiveness of the law.

The spirituality and comprehensiveness of the Divine law in its two great commandments, He illustrated in most of His discourses, especially in His answer to the lawyer. (Mark xii. 28—34.) Its application to all of every nation, He taught in reply to the question of another lawyer, at an earlier period of His ministry. (Luke x. 25–27.) The spirit of the law was still further illustrated in His fearful denunciations of the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, (Luke xi. 37–54; Matthew xii. 38–42; xvi. 1–12; John viii. 2–10,) and especially in Matthew xxiii. 13–39. The law of divorce He also took occasion to explain, freeing it from licentious abuse. (Matthew xix. 3–12.)

Uncharitable judgments.

Uncharitable judgments Christ rebuked from the history of the Galileans, and at the same time corrected the impression which the Jews had gained from a perversion of their own dispensation, to the effect that providential calamities were not so much the evidence of the general disorder of human nature, as of individual guilt. (Luke xiii. 1–9.) The persecuting spirit of His disciples He also severely condemns. (Luke ix. 56.)

Prayer. Trust. Dependence.

The great lesson of prayer He repeated, (Luke xi. 1–13,) also the lesson of confidence in the providence of God; (Luke xii. 1–59;) frequently recognizing, in the directest forms, the dependence of man for all spiritual blessings and Divine attainment, on the sovereign grace of His Father. (Matt. xi. 25–27; Luke x. 17–24; John xvii.)

Miracles, parables, and acts of Christ included in His moral teaching.

44. These passages are all independent, it will be noticed, of His parables and miracles, each of which was intended to set forth some great moral or spiritual truth. They are independent, moreover, of the acts of His life, which were in themselves an embodiment of divinest law, exhibiting *in deeds* what His teaching set forth in the common tongue.

The great evangelical truth—that morality depends on faith, taught elsewhere.

45. What our Lord taught in relation to Himself, (faith in Him being represented elsewhere as the foundation of all acceptable service,) and in relation to the union of His disciples, will be noticed hereafter. It is enough to state, in passing, that Christ regards the feeling of reliance on God's covenant mercy as essential to obedience. Without

it there is no true sense of sin, no recognition of God, no desire for holiness, and therefore no virtue. The connection between these excellencies and faith, which last is but a persuasion by the heart of our true condition, and of the fullness of the mercy that saves us, is one of the sublimest, as it is one of the most important practical truths of the Gospel.

§ 3. Christ's teaching in relation to His own work.

46. In the last section, Christ appears as the expounder of the moral law. In this character the people admired Him. As a worker of miracles they also bore testimony to His power and grace. But He had other and more significant lessons, and was soon to show how far the Jews, and how far His own disciples, even, were prepared to receive them. A right understanding of the Divine law, and admiration of Christ's works and character, were far from being all the Gospel which our nature required.

Christ prepares for further disclosures,

It needed time, however, to prepare the people for further disclosures; and in the interval our Lord proceeded with His mission of love, revealing as much in miracles, and afterwards in parables, as they were able to bear.

though gradually.

47. The first narrative that meets us after the sermon on the mount, is the healing of the centurion's servant. Matthew, writing for Jewish converts, omits the fact that this soldier sent to our Lord *through the Jews*, as it might have ministered to the old national pride. (Matt. viii. 5.) Luke, writing for Gentile converts, mentions it to keep in mind the favor in which the Jews once stood to God. (Luke vii. 1, &c.) With like moral purpose, Luke does not notice our Lord's comment on this Gentile's faith as fully as Matthew does; the one inserting what might check the corrupt tendency

Miracle of the centurion's servant.

of his Jewish readers, and the other omitting what might have strengthened similar feelings in the minds of Gentiles. (Matt. viii. 11, 12.)

Shows importance of faith in our Lord's power.

The quality which drew forth our Saviour's remarks was the centurion's faith; and involving, as it did, a recognition of Christ's relation to the spiritual world, it is very beautiful. Christ appears to him as the true *Imperator;** the ruler of both heaven and of earth. "Speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed."

The raising of the widow's son.

48. Luke's next miracle is highly characteristic of His Gospel. It is the history of the widow's son, her ONLY son; a word which he uses with quite touching human emphasis. (Luke vii. 12.) We find it again in the case of the daughter of Jairus; and again in the miracle of the child possessed with an evil spirit. (viii. 42; ix. 38.) The whole narrative is rich in suggestions; and exhibits the tenderness of the character of Christ in striking contrast with the dignity and power ascribed to Him in the earlier verse.

A spiritual revelation concerning himself at hand.

49. Though these miracles had a deep spiritual meaning, a direct spiritual revelation of Christ had not yet been given in Galilee. At Jerusalem he *had* distinctly announced his office in all its dignity, and had excited bitter hostility amongst the leaders of the people. (John v.) He had intimated, moreover, that the time was at hand when all true obedience would be tested by the way in which men received His message, and submitted to His claims; (ver. 20;) but we do not find, as yet, any announcement of these truths to His countrymen in Galilee. It was now, however, at hand.

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* Trench on the Miracles.

John sends messengers to Christ.

50. For the last several months John the Baptist had been in prison, paying the penalty of his fidelity; and, though he had long ago borne witness to the person and office of our Lord, he, or perhaps the little band that still adhered to him, was not prepared for all the results of His mission. (Matt. xi. 1–6; Luke vii. 18, 19.) He perhaps expected a temporal king, or had counted at least on personal favor. His own protracted imprisonment had, perhaps, weakened his faith; and had certainly weakened the faith of his followers. He therefore sends them to Christ, not to ask whether He was a prophet, for this fact he does not seem to doubt, but whether He was the Messianic prophet whom Moses foretold (προφήτὴς ὁ ἐρχόμενος). In reply our Lord appeals to His miracles, and quotes a passage from the ancient prophets, applicable only to the Messiah, and fulfilled in Himself; adding, in the hearing of John's disciples, though not of the multitude, "Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in Me." He then proceeds to honor and defend before the people the ministry of John, and tells them the character which they had gained by their treatment of His message. "God," says He in substance, "finds it impossible to meet the expectations of unsanctified men. He has addressed them by different ministries, and has adapted His truth to their condition, but all in vain. When one servant came mourning, men had no tears; when another came in joy, men did not dance. It is impossible to please them. A *just* God is approved by the conscience, but soon becomes an object of dread and hatred to their hearts. A God all mercy might please their hearts, but by their conscience would certainly be condemned. At last, however, the wisdom of God will commend itself, in all its disclosures, and methods of disclosure, to His children."

Christ's reply and defence of John.

51. A significant fact soon threw light on the intimations which Christ was about to give. He had entered the house of a Pharisee, at his invitation, to dine, and had met with a kindly reception. (Luke vii. 36.) But Christ's higher character is not that of a common guest, nor yet of a worker of miracles. Neither did Simon, nor on an earlier occasion, did Nicodemus fully see His power or grace. This favor was reserved for a humbler visitant. A poor woman enters the house, a sinner of the city; and after an interview with Him, left it with a clearer knowledge of our Lord, and with holier satisfaction with His teaching, than either the Jewish rabbi or the courteous host had gained. Nothing rightly introduces us to Christ but sin, and nothing rightly reveals Him but a sense of sin. His highest character is, that He forgives and cancels it. He is the prophet and the teacher, but he is above all the Redeemer; and those only know Him who come to Him with this feeling. So she came, weeping and anointing His feet, and wiping them with her hair. Her faith opened the door of her heart, and entertained Christ there as He most loved to be entertained; while everything else, the hospitality of the Pharisee and the enquiries of Nicodemus, left Him still without. And it is this truth which Christ came to reveal—that men are lost, and that He appeared to seek and to save them. Sin only leads us to Him; and He leads us only as sinners to God. The same truths—that a sense of need is the qualification that helps men to see Christ, and that Christ's highest character is that of a Saviour—came out in other parts of the inspired narrative, but nowhere in action more clearly than here.

Dines with a Pharisee; receives a woman who is a sinner.

Significance of this fact.

With true Pharisaic spirit, the host saw in this reception of a sinner, an evidence against the Messiahship of his guest; but Christ rebuked his reasoning. (Luke vii. 39.) The gift of her love He honored before the feast of His host; not as the ground of her acceptance, but as the evidence and fruit of it. "Much has been forgiven; for (thou seest) she loves much." "Thy faith (adds He, to make this truth clear) hath saved thee. Go in peace."

Christ's exclamation.

2. It is in connection with some such scene, and probably with this, that our Lord answered and said: "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. . . . "Come unto me *all* ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls." (Matt. xi. 25–30.) Here are clearly the rudiments of a teaching not less important, and infinitely more cheering, than the right exposition of the law. (Luke viii. 1.) But these lessons were to receive in a few weeks an ampler explanation.

Christ served and followed by women.

53. The feeling that found utterance, in the case of the woman who was a sinner, in tears and gifts, prompted others of her sex to services of personal kindness. (Luke viii. 2, 3.) The sorrows of the one, and the active labors of the other, were alike accepted, and were both probably the fruits of conscious forgiveness and spiritual blessing.

The second and third circuit of Galilee.

54. And now commences the second circuit of Galilee. In company with His disciples, our Lord visited every city and village, preaching the glad tidings of the kingdom. (Luke viii. 1.) A third time was the journey taken by the apostles (ix. 1); and afterwards by the seventy (x. 1); all working and preaching as they went.

Miracles wrought at the beginning of these journeys.

At the commencement of this tour our Lord healed the man possessed of a devil, blind, and dumb; the Scribes blaspheming, and asking further signs of his mission. He then, with His disciples, crossed the lake of Tiberias, healing the demoniacs of Gadara; raising the daughter of Jairus; stopping the issue of blood; opening the eyes of the blind, and casting out a dumb spirit. (Luke xi. 14; viii. 26, 41–56.) Throughout the whole of these miracles we trace a double characteristic. Everywhere the destructive power of the devil is rebuked, and the redeeming power of the Saviour is revealed. If He judged at all, it is sin or unbelief, not the sinner. The poor and guilty are ever welcome.

Lessons taught in these miracles.

55. Every act of healing, moreover, performed on the bodies of men, represented significantly the spiritual healing that they required; and excepting the miracles that were wrought upon the devils, or upon the sea, all taught the necessity of a sense of need and faith. When the poor sufferer, who had a fountain of uncleanness in her very flesh, said: "If I may but touch the hem of His garment, I shall be clean;" He replied: "Daughter, thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace." (Luke viii. 48.) "Fear not," said he again, "only believe." (Mark v. 36.) "Believe ye that I am able to do this unto you? And they said, Yea, Lord. According to your faith be it unto you." (Matt. ix. 28, 29.) How instructive is this truth—that faith, which is nothing in itself, is everything under the Gospel, because it places us in living connection with Him in whom all is stored!

Further notice of the labors of the twelve: results.

56. And now that the coming of the kingdom of God has been twice announced throughout Galilee, and Christ's character as a teacher revealed, the time seems come for more spiritual disclosures.

But the result of the labors of the disciples is instructive, and first claims our regard. Twice during his personal ministry did our Lord commission and send forth His disciples. To the tribes of Israel, He first sent the twelve; afterwards the seventy (a number answering to what the Jews supposed to be the number of the nations of the earth); and now the former return to tell the success of their message.

Object of their mission.

He sent them out to announce the approach of the kingdom of heaven; He conferred upon them the power of working miracles; He bade them make no provision for their journey, but trust in God; to be content with whatever was offered to them; to abide in the first house that was kindly opened to them, and thence to extend their labors round it. (Luke ix. 1–6.) In the end they found their wants all supplied, and they admitted that they had lacked nothing. (Luke xxii. 35.) In their work they were to combine purity with wisdom, the qualities of the serpent and dove.

Christ Himself laboring contemporaneously.

As soon as He had sent them, He Himself went forth to teach and preach "in their cities;" thus showing that under His kingdom He gives no commands which He does not Himself obey. (Matt. xi. 1.) He first bears the cross, and then says to His disciples: "Follow Me."

The twelve return; and communicate to Christ the results.

57. He seems to have selected a well-known spot at the head of the lake, as the place of meeting after this first missionary tour was completed. "The apostles," we are told, "gathered themselves together, and told Him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught." (Mark vi. 30.)

How delightful is this confidence! They told Him of their failures and of their success; of their wisdom and of their folly; of their reliance and of their unbelief. We can easily imagine the blessedness of this meeting; the honest greetings with which every new comer was welcomed by those who had chanced to arrive before him. We seem to see Christ listening with affectionate earnestness to the recital of their adventures; and interposing from time to time a word of encouragement or of caution, as the character and narrative of each might demand.

The heart of each was unveiled, and the words spoken were eminently in season. The fatigues of their journey were none of them remembered, as each received from the Saviour the smile of His approval. That was truly a joyful meeting; and of all that company not one has forgotten the day, nor will ever forget it

They retire to a desert place

58. Christ saw, however, that His disciples needed further counsel. By doing His will they were prepared for richer communications, and they had committed errors which needed correction. Surrounded as they were, moreover, by the crowds, they found rest and retirement equally impossible; "there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure, no, not so much as to eat bread." (Mark vi. 31.) "Come ye," said He, "yourselves into a desert place, and rest awhile."

The religion of Christ requires retirement, as certainly as it requires publicity. The disciples had for some time been living before the eyes of men, and they needed communion with one another and with their Lord. For some weeks they had traveled on foot under a tropical sun, reasoning with unbelievers and instructing the ignorant, obedient to every call of weakness and poverty; and now they needed rest. *His* rule is ever consistent with benevolence; He cares for the benefactor as well as for the recipient. "He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust."

Partly to meet these necessities, and partly, perhaps, to be out of the jurisdiction of Herod, whose anxious curiosity concerning Him might have interfered with our Lord's plans, He and His disciples cross the lake and enter the desert, *i. e.*, the thinly peopled country of Bethsaida. Here, in the cool and retired neighborhood of the lake, He began to instruct them, and without interruption to make known to them the mysteries of His kingdom. It was a season such as our Lord seldom enjoyed; and it must have been delightful to all who witnessed and shared His love.

59. Soon, however, the scene was changed. The multitude from Capernaum, making a hasty journey round the north end of the lake, discover the place of His retreat; an immense crowd approaches, and the little band is surrounded by them. Some of these suitors present most importunate claims; healing and strength are sought by most for themselves or for their friends; and every one, believing his own claim to be most urgent, presses forward with anxious importunity.

Visited by the crowds.

The interruption could not fail to be unwelcome. The apostles needed rest; they required further instruction, and such opportunities of intercourse with Christ were exceedingly rare. But what did they do; rebuke and dismiss the multitudes? Not so. The providence of God had sent them, and that same providence forbade our Lord to send them away unblessed. He at once broke up the conference with His disciples, and addressed Himself to the work before Him. His instructions were doubtless of great value; but it may be questioned whether even they were more important than the example of humility, kindness, and compassion, which He here exhibited.

His presence awed and stilled the crowd. He views them as "sheep scattered without a shepherd." (Matt. ix. 36; Luke ix. 11.) He seeks at once to relieve and instruct them; speaking to them of the kingdom of God, and healing those that had need of healing.

A day devoted to teaching and healing.

The greater part of a long summer's day had been employed in this double work. Now the shades of evening are gathering around the multitude, who have nothing to eat. To send them away fasting would be inhuman, for most of them had come from far, and many of them were women and children, who could not perform their journey homeward without previous re-

The people need bread.

freshment. Even Philip, moreover, who was a native of that district, knew not where it was possible to buy bread for them, had the money to pay for it been at hand. The crowds, therefore, were thrown upon the bounty of our Lord. He had not led them into the wilderness; they came to Him of themselves, to hear His words, and be healed of their infirmities; he could not send them away, however, "lest they should faint by the way." (Matt. xv. 32.) Nothing remained to be done, therefore, but to put forth Divine power.

The miracle of the loaves.

60. The little basket of provisions in the hands of the disciples seems barely enough for themselves. It consists of only five loaves and two small fishes; but with God's blessing and the Saviour's power it is enough for all. The large mass of human beings, amounting now to five thousand, besides women and children, are arranged in groups of orderly guests all seated on the grass. Silence is obtained; the blessing of God is implored upon the scanty meal; and immediately He begins to break the loaves and the fishes. He distributes them to His disciples, and His disciples distribute them to the multitude. He continues to break and distribute; basket after basket is filled and emptied; and at last the baskets are returned full, and it is announced that the wants of the multitude are supplied. The miracle then ceases, and the miraculous provision of food is at an end. (Mark v. 25–44.)

Lessons.

Everything here is instructive. To have led the crowds into this position without providing for them, would have been presumption; to sustain them when there, was unmingled mercy.

He began to break and distribute in faith the meal which had been provided only for Himself and His disciples; the supply increased as it was required, and it ceased not until all that had been prayed for was accomplished.

And these were the acts of a single day. Private kindness and instruction, the cure of disease, public teaching, and the relief of the wants of famishing crowds, filled up the day. Such were the occupations of the Son of God.*

These the acts of a single day.

The impressions these labors produced upon the multitude were deep and general, though alas! not of the holiest kind. It was concluded that *He* must be their deliverer; and many of the people were disposed to employ all the means in their power to induce Him to assume those royal honors which He had shown that He could so easily maintain.

Result.

61. Aware of this feeling, our Lord first sent away His disciples; and the multitude, supposing that Christ must remain in the desert till the morning, and that they would find Him there, quietly dispersed; our Lord retiring, after they left Him, to spend the greater part of the night in communion with God.

The crowd dismissed.

The night itself was an important and instructive one; abounding too in evidences of the Saviour's kindness and power. (Matt. xiv.)

Early in the morning the people collected to carry their purpose into effect, and began to seek for Jesus; He was nowhere, however, to be found. They therefore crossed over the lake in some boats that had arrived that morning from Tiberias, and entered Capernaum, where they found Him in the synagogue teaching the people.

62. And now comes the decisive disclosure of our Saviour's character. The people had expected a temporal king. Christ's power had seemed to point Him out as the coming Messiah, and they appear to hail and crown Him. But the higher their hopes the greater their disappointment, and ultimately the

Christ at Capernaum. His discourse there.

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* See Dr. Wayland's Sermon on "a Day in the life of Jesus of Nazareth," from which many of these thoughts are taken.

greater their rage, when He offered them something entirely different from what they sought. Carnal, earthly enthusiasm easily passes over to opposition, and Christ was about to feel the truth of this rule. "Master," said they, "when camest thou hither?" (John vi. 25–27; 35, 51.) Their question, which sprung probably from idle curiosity, which must say something, and hoped, perhaps, to hear how He had come, our Lord answered only with a rebuke: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, ye seek me not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves and were filled. Labor not for the meat that perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life; and which the Son of man shall give unto you, for him hath the Father, God, sealed." "Not conviction, but self-interest; not a spiritual kingdom, but secular blessing—'the meat that perisheth' is the object of your pursuit. The meat which, imperishable in its nature, supports an immortal life, is what I have come to reveal; and that meat I give; and that meat," he adds, "I am."

By what works of Divine appointment (they answer) may we obtain this blessing—this meat, and the eternal life which you profess to impart? "Credit my testimony, believe on me," is His reply, "and the gift shall be yours. With this faith everything is bestowed; pardon and holiness, and a blessedness such as your largest thoughts have never conceived."

This answer suggests other questions. "You profess to be the greater prophet of whom Moses wrote. What sign showest thou? Give us not human food, but heavenly, such at least as Moses gave; nay more, let it be angels' food, celestial manna, and so fulfill our expectations of millennial bliss." "That celestial bread," our Lord replies, "is Myself; heavenly bread Moses did not give, but I give it. I give it for the life of the world. He that cometh to Me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst. Receive Me as Redeemer, Sanctifier, King, and All, and your happiness shall be complete."

This effort to awaken the desire of the Jews for the bread that Christ came to supply failed; they scrupled about His meaning, and murmured at His sayings. He did not, therefore, reason with them on their scruples, but points out the source of them; the dispositions of their hearts and minds. Of these it was necessary that they should be rid, before they could receive His divine manifestation. "Murmur not among yourselves; no man can come unto me, except the Father draw him." (John vi. 43, 44.) Seek within you, and not without you, the cause of your surprise. It lies here, that you have no sense of spiritual need, and no sense therefore of the value of the provision I have made. This lesson God teaches, as your own prophets have foretold. Not, however, that any man can know and be united to God but through the Son; for He only hath seen the Father, and He only hath revealed Him.

The general truth.

The rejection of Christ is ever the expression and result of unsanctified natural feeling. The salvation of Christ is too spiritual for the unrenewed; too humbling for the proud; too holy for the sinful; too heavenly for the sensual and earthly. The influence of the Spirit, and the cogency of the truth understood and believed, are required to induce men to come to Christ, and these are from above. Man's ruin, therefore, belongs to himself; his salvation to God. The first is the fruit of our corruption and depravity; the second originates with the Father, is effected by the Son, and is received through the Spirit. We have ruined ourselves, and in God only is our help to be found.

Remarkable language employed. Its meaning.

These great truths our Lord puts into other forms, and repeats them. He gives Himself, He tells them, "as the bread of heaven;" He gives "His flesh," His body, or life, to obtain happiness. "This," adds He, "is the bread I give. It is by this I secure for them that believe everlasting life." "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh, and drink the blood of the Son of Man, ye have no life in you." His "flesh and blood" is clearly a phrase equivalent to his sufferings and death; not separated from his earthly existence, and teaching, and spirit, but involving them all. He, the bread—His flesh and blood, our life, exhausts the whole truth; and these expressions embody, though in dark and figurative phraseology, the sublimest truths. All figures apart, Christ himself as our sacrifice—Christ himself as the substance of all blessings, the staff of our strength, the support of our life—must be believed and trusted. He must be in us, and we in Him, in order that we may be saved. As the Father is the life-giving Father, so I, adds He, am the life-giving bread: "he that eateth Me shall live."

A hard saying. Why rejected.

63. Throughout the chapter these figures are interchanged, and literal interpretations are added Most of His hearers, however, failed to understand how His words explained and illustrated each other. Adhering to the outward and material sense, they seized upon the expressions which were most striking; hesitated, from the low position of the teacher, to give them their deepest meaning; and found in the whole hard sayings which they could not bear; *comparatively difficult*, but *superlatively distasteful*. Jesus, moreover, knowing in Himself that His disciples also (for not a word had been spoken by them) murmured, said unto them: "Doth this offend you? What if ye shall see the Son ascend up whither He was before? (John vi. 61, 62.) All your hopes of an earthly kingdom must then vanish, and the idea of eating my flesh in a literal sense become perfectly groundless. Can ye not perceive that it is a spiritual truth I am teaching; and it is to spiritual influences, and doc-

trines, and blessings I refer; but in that spirit ye are deficient, and, as I said before, your carnal sense is the cause of your misunderstanding and unbelief." (ver. 65.)

Many of the disciples leave.

64. Then followed a sifting of His disciples. "From that time many went back, and walked no more with Him." They were not prepared for a spiritual kingdom; and Christ rather favored than discouraged their going. (John vi. 66–69.) To the twelve he said, "Will ye also go?" And Peter, speaking, as usual, for the rest, bore testimony to his experience of the blessedness of his fellowship with Christ: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life;" therefore, he adds, "We believe that Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Peter's confession.

The traitor indicated.

65. In His reply to this confession, Christ warned them that there was one who did not share their conviction. He had chosen them and called them; but one of them had the heart of a foe. Even the traitor was not unwarned; these words might have led to repentance and pardon—failing this result, they must have deepened his enmity. Probably it may have been from this very conversation (which embodied statements quite inconsistent with the idea of a temporal kingdom) that Judas gathered fresh motives for the betrayal of Christ; and if so, it is an instance of spiritual truth becoming, as it often does, life to them that are saved, and death to them that perish.

General lessons.

66. The revelation of Christ that is most spiritual, is also most humbling. Some reject Him, as did His countrymen at Nazareth, because of the lowliness of His guise and position; others, as here, for the humbling depth of his doctrine, and the spirituality of His reign. Those who, like Peter, acknowledge the completeness of their dependence on Christ, are the first to

ascribe to Him His true dignity: "Thou givest eternal life; Thou, therefore, art the Son of the living God."

Christ's miracles all significant.

67. The miracle of the loaves evidently suggested to our Lord the phraseology of His discourse to the people at Capernaum; and the bread which He had broken was a symbol of the bread of life He was about to supply. The eating, the division into companies, the ministration of the disciples, and the subsequent care of the fragments, may all be regarded as more or less symbolical of the order and duties of the church His miracles are thus not only evidences—they are lessons. As He was Himself the *Word* of God, so all the acts of this Word are words. They are not pictures merely, which we are to examine and admire; they are words which we are to understand; for they have each, if we are to study them, their own, and often the deepest meaning.

Enumerated and classified. In nature.

68. Nine of the miracles recorded in the Gospels were wrought in *nature*. The water He made wine; the tempest He stilled; the sea He made as solid as earth, and walked upon it; twice He multiplied the bread, till now five thousand, and then four thousand were filled; twice He found in the miraculous draughts of fishes emblems of the work and progress of His kingdom; once the fish supplied Him, through Peter, with proof of His sonship; and once the barren fig-tree was blasted and withered as an emblem of the fate of the city near which He stood.

On man.

The remainder of the miracles were all wrought in a nobler field. Twice He healed persons afflicted with leprosy; four times He opened the eyes of the blind; thrice He cast out devils; thrice He raised the dead; and many times besides He healed all manner of diseases. These are His *recorded* miracles—many others of the same kind He did in all parts of Judea, "which are not written" in these books.

69. All these miracles illustrate the blessings Christ came to introduce; all, the necessity of power and of faith; and each miracle has, besides, lessons of its own.

Lessons taught in these miracles.

How beautifully does His power over nature illustrate His providence. "All things are put under His feet." He was about to send forth His disciples into a cold persecuting world, but He bids them distrust neither His inclination nor His ability to help them. "O fear the Lord, ye His saints; for there is no want to them that fear him." (Ps. xxxiv. 9.) Nature and providence are His; He is head over them all for the church.

How instructive when the lepers are cleansed; the blind eyes opened; the possessed restored to their right mind; the dead raised! Each act an emblem of the spiritual blessings which Christ came to bestow; and each, if examined in detail, illustrative of the principles on which He still acts in imparting His gifts.

Man and God are alike revealed in these portions of the sacred page.

70. As the miracles of Christ are illustrative of His character and work, so are His acts and the circumstances of His life. Every thing He did and suffered was instructive; revealing sometimes the nature of His work, and sometimes the character to which Christians are to be conformed.

All the acts of Christ part of His revelation.

71. Prophets, for example, had described Him as gentle and compassionate. "He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street; "a bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench." (Is. xlii. 2, 3.) "He shall feed His flock like a shepherd; so shall He gather the lambs in His arms, and carry them in His bosom."

Illustrated in His gentleness.

And turning to His life, how does He sustain this distinction? His emblem was the lamb; the Holy Ghost descends upon Him as a dove descends; angels speak of the truth He reveals, as "peace on earth, and good will to men." (Luke ii. 14.)

How does He employ the power with which God endowed Him? Once, it is true, He cursed the barren fig-tree, and it withered away; but it was barren and unowned. The curse, moreover, was intended to be an instructive and solemn warning. It is true also, that He destroyed the herd of swine belonging to the Gadarenes; but the miracle was in rebuke of the worldliness it elicited, and was intended, moreover, as an evidence of the reality of the power He had dispossessed. All His other miracles were entirely and distinctly acts of love.

And what utterances has He given? It is true that He denounced the Scribes and Pharisees; and against them His voice WAS heard. But then they were hypocrites, and He came to teach truth as well as mercy. His gentleness was never intended as a renunciation of wisdom or of righteousness; and to disabuse the minds of the people concerning their false guides, was clearly part of his office. In relation to others, however, how lowly was His whole deportment; how easy of access; how tender in invitation; how mild in rebuke; how ready to suggest excuse when the offender himself had none. How did He address the people? "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matt. xi. 28.) How did He receive children? "Suffer them," said He to His disciples, to "come unto me, and forbid them not" . . . "and *He* took them up in His arms and blessed them." (Luke xviii. 16.) At the grave of Lazarus "Jesus wept." (John xi. 35.) His mother He commended to the care of His disciples. How gentle in all His dealings with His apostles; bearing with their mistakes, forgiving their infirmities, and loving them, in spite of repeated provocations, even unto the end. How pitiful towards His enemies, weeping over the city whose inhabitants were about to imbrue their hands in His blood; healing the ear of the servant of His bitterest foe; not destroying those who came to apprehend Him, but surrendering himself quietly, arranging only for the escape of His followers. On the cross He prayed for His murderers, and afterwards bade His disciples proclaim to *them* first the Gospel of peace.

He is the same still—He relieves, and teaches, and chastens, and pities, and employs us with the same condescension. It becomes us, therefore, to dismiss all slavish dread; to trust Him, to admire Him, to follow and copy Him, till by studying His character we are "changed from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord." (2 Cor. iii. 18.)

Illustrated in His poverty.

72. Again, He commanded His disciples to practise self-denial; and Himself illustrated, in every circumstance of his condition, the virtue He thus enjoined. He has told us, "the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head." During his private life, indeed, He lived with Joseph and Mary at Nazareth; and after He had entered upon His ministry, He had some friends who, like Martha, afforded Him the accommodation of their dwellings; but these advantages were occasional, and of the nature of hospitality. He never possessed an apartment He could call His own. He was born in another man's house. Widows ministered to him of their substance. He partook of the last Passover in another man's chamber. At last He was buried in another man's grave. And He *felt* this condition the more painful from the dignity He had left. It was part of his humiliation to bear it. Yet He never repented of His engagement. It was ever His feeling: "Lo, I come—*I delight* to do thy will, O God." (Ps. xl. 7, 8.) As His agony drew nearer, He even longed for it: "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished." (Luke xii. 50.)

And does not this poverty fit Him for His position? How it illustrates His grace! How cheering to the poor! It is enough that the servant be as his Master, and the disciple as his Lord. How suggestive of the test of true greatness. Such greatness is personal, and not circumstantial; it is in the character, and not in the condition. How humbling to our nature! The people allowed Him to suffer, and so proved their real character. It was a reproach to the Corinthians, that Paul, while preaching and working miracles among them, had to labor day and night for his support. How much greater the reproach that this was Christ's condition! Surely (our first feeling is) men will "reverence the Son.' At His coming nobles and princes will welcome Him to their homes; and they will deem themselves amply repaid by His condescension in accepting their invitations. But He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew him not. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. (John i. 10, 11.) The Lord of all, and the acquaintance of grief—the image of the Invisible God, and yet "the despised and rejected of men." And is human nature changed? How do we receive His Gospel—the members of Christ—the poor? The rule still holds: "He that receiveth you, receiveth me." It may still form the ground of our own sentence: "Inasmuch as ye did it not unto the least of these my brethren, ye did it not unto me."—Depart. (Matt. xxv. 45.)

What taught by this fact.

73. The miracles and parables, the sayings and acts, and the sufferings of our Lord, therefore, are all instructive, and reveal some truth connected either with God, or with ourselves, or with both.

All Christ's acts and sayings instructive.

SECT. 4. CHRIST'S FURTHER DISCLOSURES IN GALILEE AND IN JUDÆA.

Resolves to visit Galilee.

74. Christ's desire for further private intercourse with His disciples, and the continued presence of Herod in Galilee, induced our Lord to remove from the neighborhood of Capernaum. He resolved to visit the north of Galilee, and thither He now proceeded with His disciples.

Conversation with the Scribes.

75. Before leaving Capernaum, however, He had a long conversation with Scribes and Pharisees from Jerusalem on the use of tradition, and especially on the importance of inward religion, as compared with ceremonial purity (Mark vii. 1–23); Christ teaching, in opposition to the common doctrine of the Pharisees, that the things which are within are those that defile, and that for evil thoughts, and unholy desires (rather than for neglect of ceremonial observances) men will be condemned.

Visits Tyre and Sidon.

76. The first visit of our Lord is paid to the region of Tyre and Sidon; and there the Syro-Phœnician woman pleaded with Christ for her daughter (against even His own discouragements) and prevailed. "O woman," said He, "great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt." (Matt. xv. 28.)

Decapolis.

77. In the district of Decapolis the miracle of feeding a large multitude was repeated; and a deaf and dumb man was healed. Again the Scribes seek a sign, and again the disciples of our Lord are warned against their temper and spirit.

Bethsaida

78. At Bethsaida a blind man received his sight, and the common admonition was added—that he should tell no man what Jesus had done.

And here, being in the neighborhood of Cæsarea Philippi, our Lord found himself once more alone with His disciples, and continued the conversation which He had broken off a little time before. He resumed it (in the midst of a season of solemn prayer) by asking the opinions generally prevalent concerning himself. Peter renewed the confession he had made on a previous occasion; and in contrast with those who said that Jesus was only a prophet, he affirmed: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." (Matt. xvi. 16, 17.)

Peter's second confession.

79. Thus had Peter twice borne testimony to our Lord: first, in opposition to those whom Christ's spiritual teaching had estranged; and now, in opposition to those who entertained inferior views of His person. His answer our Lord expressly ascribes to no human teaching, but directly to God: "Flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but my Father, who is in heaven."

Christ's promise.

Its fulfillment.

80. On receiving this confession of Peter, in relation to the truth which forms the unchangeable basis of the kingdom of God, Christ called him by the name which, in the exercise of a prophetic spirit, he had already assigned him: "Thou art Peter, the man of rock; and on thee, as a steadfast witness in my name, I will build my church; a church that is to remain imperishable, triumphant over both hell and death." (Matt. xvi. 18.) In fulfillment of this promise, we find that the labors of Peter formed the foundation—that is, the commencement of the spiritual temple which Christ came to found—both Jews and Gentiles having been first called and converted under his ministry. (Acts ii. and x.)*

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* It is with reluctance we differ from our excellent author; but in this instance, as in a few before, we must express our decided dissent from his interpretation of this important passage. The facts here mentioned respecting Peter's labors may be fully admitted, without regarding them as at all concerned in the fulfillment of this particular promise.

To us it appears clear, from the preceding context, that Peter spoke here *simply as a true disciple, in the name of the rest,* (as he did in John

81. Christ then adds, "and I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven;" a promise which was afterwards extended to all

A second promise.

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vi. 68, 69,) in reply to a question of our Lord as to the nature of *their common faith in Him.* That faith our Lord approves as divine in its origin, and true in its object; and therefore worthy of being recognized as *the essential characteristic of his disciples in all ages.* By means of this faith He will build His Church; for this alone unites the soul to Him, the true foundation, and makes it partaker of His life, stability, and usefulness. So Peter himself, enlightened by the Holy Spirit, understood and clearly expounds his Master. "Unto whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, ye also, as living stones, are built up, a spiritual house." (1 Pet. ii. 4, 5.) No merely human authority can set aside this inspired interpretation, sustained, as it is, by the concurrent voice of all the Apostles and Prophets. (Ps. cxviii. 22; Isa. xxviii. 16; Acts iv. 11, 12; Rom. ix. 33; 1 Cor. iii. 11; Ephes. ii. 20–22; 1 Peter ii. 6–8.)

It follows, "that the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven" are given to Peter, not as the Primate of the Church (as Rome contends), nor as an Apostle or Preacher of the Gospel (as most Protestants, with our author, suppose); but *as the representative of all true believers in Christ,* building on Him as the true foundation. These constitute the Christian Church in all ages, against which the gates of Hell shall not prevail. The profession of this faith in the appointed mode makes them members of THE VISIBLE CHURCH—which is only the aggregate of all particular local "churches of the saints." The power of the Keys, or Church Power in general, is here given by Christ alike, and equally, to the individual believers of whom they are composed, to be exercised under His laws in their united capacity. This interpretation is so impregnably fortified by the repetition of the same term in Matt. xviii. 18, in immediate connection with the action of particular churches, that we can only wonder at the pertinacity with which a different opinion is held.

Hence it is impossible for us to agree in the opinion of our author in paragraphs 80–82; much less in the Note which aims to support it. To suppose our Lord would say what he does in Matt. xviii. 15–20, in reference to a Jewish synagogue, is, in our judgment, opposed to all sound exegesis, all facts, all analogies; not to mention that near this time all Christians were excluded from the Jewish synagogues. (John ix. 22.) —J. N. B.

the twelve (John xx. 23), and implied that the laws and truths of the kingdom of Christ were to be revealed and enforced in the personal ministry of his apostles, and then to be committed by them in a permanent written form to the custody of his church. (2 Cor. ii. 15; Matt. x. 13.) This kingdom, however, the disciples did not yet understand; and therefore they are strictly forbidden to proclaim Christ's dignity and office—a caution which the result of the very first subsequent disclosure of our Lord proves not to be unneeded.

Its meaning and fulfillment.

82. Here, it will be observed, the word "church" occurs for the first time in the Gospel; nor do we meet with it again in the Inspired Narrative, in the same sense, till we come to the Acts of the Apostles.*

The church.

83. We have already seen that Christ frequently spoke of himself in mysterious terms. He had told Nicodemus that He was to be lifted up; He had assured the multitude that unless they ate His flesh, and drank His blood, they could not live; but the truth involved in these declarations had not been distinctly revealed, and the declarations themselves, therefore, were in a great measure incomprehensible. "*From this time*," however, "He began to show unto His disciples how He must go to Jerusalem, suffer many things, and be killed, and after three days rise again;" and "this saying He spake even openly." (Mark viii. 32.)

Christ's kingdom founded on suffering.

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* Twice it is found afterwards in Matthew: "Go tell it to the church," and "if he hear not the church;" but in this passage, probably, the reference is rather to the ecclesiastical assemblies of the Jews. The principle embodied in the command is universally applicable; but it is doubtful whether there was any intention upon the part of our Lord to bring out there the peculiar ideas of the Church of Christ. [But see the preceding Editorial Note.—J. N. B.]

84. This idea, that His kingdom was to be established through suffering, His apostles could not admit. Peter, therefore, took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "Be it far from thee, Lord;" (Matt. xvi. 22, 23;) an exclamation inspired, doubtless, by love—but by love of an earthly origin. As Christ had commended Peter for a confession which flesh and blood had not revealed unto him, so now He reproves him for utterances which sprung from a feeling entirely selfish.

Peter's opinion of this truth.

85. "Get thee behind me, Satan," says our Lord, in language of stronger indignation than any he had yet used in addressing His followers. He then turned to His disciples, and gave them a lesson the very opposite of what Peter had sought to enforce, reminding them that life itself is to be held in subordination to the interests of the kingdom of God. "Be ready," his language implies, "to sacrifice everything on its behalf, and remember that this precept is of present importance, for 'there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the kingdom of God coming with power;'" an expression which the disciples did not understand, but which became plain in the events of Providence, and had its fulfillment in the days of Pentecost.

Christ's reply.

86. Six days after this conversation our Lord took Peter, James, and John, up into a mountain to pray, and as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, "and his raiment became white and glistening." (Luke ix. 29.) The earth had disowned her King; His last words with His disciples had been of suffering; now heaven owns Him, and the suffering is seen to be followed by glory. The representatives of the ancient law and prophets appear, and talk with Him of the issues of His approaching decease; and in the end they both disappear, while Christ is revealed as the King whom all nations are henceforth to obey (v. 31).

The transfiguration—suffering followed by glory.

Its significance to the disciples.

87. This act seems doubly significant. Coming after the declaration of His suffering, it was probably intended as a solemn installation of our Lord before His three chosen disciples, adapted to confirm them in their previous confession, and to reveal more clearly his dignity. He is here formally set forth as the King of the Church, and His word is declared to be her law. (Matt. xvii. 5.)

To our Lord.

Nor was the fact without significance to our Lord himself. The transfiguration takes its place with His baptism and the temptation, as essential to His complete preparation for his final conflict. It cheered and sustained Him.

The whole transaction may also be regarded as a representative prefiguration to us of the kingdom of God, in which Christ's chosen disciples shall witness and share His glory; and all of every dispensation make the Divine counsel in the work of redemption the great theme of their thoughts—a theme that shall fill them with admiration and praise.

These three disciples, it may be noticed, witnessed and shared His glory, as still later they beheld his sorrow. (Matt. xxvi. 37.)

The spirit which becomes apostles.

88. The object of the mission of the apostles Christ had already explained, and the spirit of self-denial in which that mission was to be undertaken. Additional lessons are now imparted of the most instructive kind.

A man, whose son was possessed by an evil spirit, had appealed to the disciples to heal him—but they had failed. From this failure the Scribes took occasion to dispute the miracles and authority of their Master; and, during the dispute, Christ suddenly appeared among the crowd, rebuked the multitude, gently chided the unbelief of the father, and then healed his son. (Mark. ix. 14.)

Great faith needed.

This defective power of the disciples Christ afterwards explained, ascribing it to the deficiency of their faith; and the deficiency of their faith to the want of that collectedness and devotion which are expressed by fasting and prayer: the whole lesson being intended to impress on their minds that they were not yet fully prepared for the duties of their ministry—duties which required, in an eminent degree, self-renunciation and trust.

Teaches by an act the necessity of a childlike disposition.

Another lesson was taught, no less impressively, in another form. Though Christ had repeatedly discouraged the earthly conceptions which His disciples had formed of His reign, their hopes in this respect were not yet eradicated. As an evidence of such expectations, tinged as they often were with something even worse than erroneous *thoughts*, the disciples disputed, on their way back to Capernaum, who was most active in their Master's service, and who should, therefore, have the first place in His kingdom. (Mark ix. 33–37.) When they reached the town, Christ asked them on what subject they had disputed by the way, intending that the very shame of answering His question should be a sufficient rebuke. Nor did he say more; but proceeded, by a very significant act, to show them the impropriety of their contention, and the spirit which they must cherish under His authority: "He is greatest," said He in effect, "who is most childlike and unassuming; nor is it, in religious acts, the action itself which gives worth, but the motive and spirit of the actor;" "to receive, therefore, a little child in my name, is to receive even me." A principle that destroys all pride, for it measures acts by their motives, and motives by their humility.

On a later occasion, when a similar question was discussed, Christ laid down the rule that those are greatest in His kingdom, who are most laborious and humble: "He that is greatest among you, let him be your servant." (Matt. xxiii. 11.)

Activity and humility tests of greatness.

The principle that things are to be estimated by the motive in which they are done, suggests a question to John's mind which brings out another lesson. "We saw men," said he, "casting out devils *in thy name*, and we forbad them, for they followed not us;" but Christ says, "Forbid them not; for no man that does miracles in my name, can lightly speak evil of me." (Mark ix. 38–40.) This act may have proceeded from inward *opposition*, and *then* the principle applies—he that is not with me is against me. But it may have proceeded from inward *affinity*, and some measure of reverence which may lead to full discipleship; and *then*—he that is not against us is on our part. At all events, forbid them not. Test acts by their motives, and so tested, there seems no reason why in this case they should be condemned.

No effort in Christ's name to be condemned without reason.

Another lesson He had to teach them. The disciples remembered the scenes of the transfiguration, and the character of Christ had since appeared to them more glorious than before. In passing through a village of the Samaritans, the people had formally rejected Him; and the disciples, reminded, probably, by what they had witnessed, or perhaps by the locality in which they then were, of the example of Elijah, asked permission to call down fire from heaven to destroy these despisers—a request that Christ immediately rebuked. "The way of the Son of Man," said he, "is different; through rejection, rather than through judgment, He is to pass to His glory; He came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them." "And they went," it is added, "to

Unholy zeal condemned.

The Son of Man came to save.

another village." (Luke ix. 51.) Whether here is the greater, the patience or the zeal; the unwearied diligence, or the inexhaustible endurance—we need not decide. Christ is equally perfect; in meekness as our model, and in activity as our Redeemer.

but will finally judge.

Mercy finally rejected, however, is followed ultimately by judgment; and, therefore, before leaving this district, He began to upbraid those cities in which His mighty works were done, because they repented not. (Matt. xi. 20–24. His first advent was only to save; His second will be both to save and to condemn.

Finally leaves Galilee.

90. After again announcing His approaching decease, and giving instructions to His Apostles in reference to the spirit which is to be cherished by all His followers, (Matt. xviii.,) He takes His final leave of Galilee, and goes up to Jerusalem.

The seventy sent out.

Samaria He takes by the way, sending seventy of His disciples into the various villages and towns of that district, to proclaim the approach of His kingdom.

Goes up to Jerusalem privately.

91. It was now eighteen months since Christ had visited the capital; the interval he had employed in preaching in Galilee, and in training the Apostles for their work. Now, however, He resolved again to visit it; partly to confirm the impressions which His previous labors had produced, and partly to avoid the imputation that He feared to give evidence of His mission in the presence of the Sanhedrim. As it was His rule to "deal prudently," He determined (though against the remonstrances of His family) to go up privately, and to appear suddenly in the city, before the Chief Priests had time to take measures for seizing His person.

After His relatives, therefore, had left Galilee, He himself set out for Jerusalem, and arrived about the middle of the feast: the feast was that of Tabernacles, and the time, the month of October. In Jerusalem and its neighborhood He remained till the feast of Dedication, held in the middle of the following December.

Christ's address at Jerusalem, John vii.

92. Already great anxiety had been expressed in the city for His reappearance, and the most opposite opinions were held concerning Him. The charge of Sabbath breaking, which had been urged against Him eighteen months before, and since through Galilee by the Pharisees and their friends, was still fresh in the public mind, and Christ found it necessary again to explain His conduct. (John vii. 11–24.

Desire to learn essential to knowledge.

On hearing His defence, the people expressed great surprise that one uneducated taught so well; "but my teaching," said He in explanation, "is not mine, but his that sent me;" as you yourselves might also know, had you the heart and the *desire* (θελειν) to learn. (ver. 17.)

Christ known and not known.

This boldness still further surprises them; and they ask whether, as the Scribes had not laid hands upon Him, they really knew that He was the Messiah; but they themselves answer the question by affirming, that, as they know whence Jesus is, He cannot be the Christ, who is to reveal himself suddenly and in His glory. (ver. 27.) Christ refutes their reasoning, by telling them that they both know Him and know Him not; real knowledge requiring obedience and love.

The Pharisees then attempt to take Him, but Christ warns them that, before long, they shall seek him and not find Him; the Jews maliciously interpreting His words to imply that He was about to publish His Gospel to the Gentiles. (John vii. 34, 35.)

Christ then announces Himself as the living water, and as the true light of the world; foretells in mysterious terms His own death; (John vii. 37, 38;) affirms that the freedom He comes to proclaim was not from the Roman yoke, but from sin, and that truth was the great instrument of imparting it; that in their hatred of truth they proved themselves to be no true children of Abraham, their boasted progenitor, but children of the devil. "Him," adds He, "whom Abraham longed for, ye seek to destroy."

The feeling of the crowd.

93. These announcements on the part of our Lord elicited different expressions of feeling. Some said that He was a Galilean; some that He was a Samaritan, and had a devil; many believed, thinking Him "a good man," or "a prophet," or even "the Christ;" but at the close the crowds cried out: "He hath a devil," and took stones to stone him. (John viii. 48; vii. 12–40; viii. 59.)

Movements of the Sanhedrim.

94. During these popular discussions the Pharisees were not idle. After the failure of their officers to take Christ, the Sanhedrim met, and discussed what steps should be taken in reference to Him. Some thought that He had broken the law and was a blasphemer. Others (among whom Nicodemus was one) thought that He ought not to be condemned unheard; and at length they seem to have resolved that, though no decisive judgment should be pronounced upon *Him*, it should be punishable for any one apart from the authority of the Sanhedrim, to acknowledge Him as the Messiah. (John vii. 52; ix. 22.

The woman taken in adultery. John viii.

95. They attempted in the meantime to entrap Him by the case of a woman taken in adultery. If He had excused her, they would have appealed to His decision as evidence of His contempt for the law; and if He had condemned her, her death would have made Him amenable to the civil power. (John viii. 3–11.) His reply to their questions is as just as it is ingenious. The lesson to her accusers, and to the woman herself, and Christ's defence of the law, are equally complete.

96. As the cure of the impotent man, on the occasion of Christ's previous visit to Jerusalem, had produced such results, our Lord now performs a similar miracle, healing on the sabbath day a man born blind. He first corrects the interpretation which the disciples were disposed to put upon the man's affliction, and then healed him; first curing his physical blindness, and then giving him to understand His own character and truth. I must work (said our Lord in explanation of this miracle) while the time of my personal ministry lasts ("the day"), for the end of my labors ("the night") approaches, when no man can work; while I am in the world, I am the light of the world. (John ix. 4, 5.)

The blind man healed.

By the gradual progress of the cure our Lord taught important spiritual lessons.

A great sensation was produced by this miracle; and the Sanhedrim attempted to corrupt, or to alarm the blind man, to induce him to deny the reality of the miracle, or the true character of Him who had performed it. With all courtesy and firmness, however, he maintained the truth, stating the fact in the simplest terms, but in such a form as implied that he deemed Christ no common man. In the end they cast him out—the first decisive public act of the rulers against our Lord.

97. Our Lord afterwards lays hold of this history—the miracle and its results—as an instance of the two opposite tendencies of His teaching. "I am come into this world," says He, "that they who see not, might see, and that they who see might be made blind:" a principle spiritually fulfilled in this case, and in all time. (John ix. 39.) Wheresoever the truth of Christ operates among men, the blind are made to see, and the seeing become blind; the grace and the condemnation go hand in hand.

Lessons taught by this history.

Christ the good shepherd.

98. This treatment of the poor blind man, and the general conduct of the Pharisees, prepare the way for the beautiful parable of the good shepherd. Christ is Himself set forth as the divinely-appointed leader of His people; His voice harmonizes with the divine drawing within; they know it, and admit Him, and he knows them and their wants; and, as they need, supplies them all.

Contrasted with the hireling and the thief.

Contrasted with Him is the *hireling* and the *thief*—the second sacrificing to wholly selfish ends the interests of the flock; and the first without courage to risk much for their good. "But I," says our Lord, "know my sheep, and am known of mine; and *I lay down my life for the sheep.*" (John x. 14–16.)

With this view of His self-sacrifice before Him, His thoughts glance to that greater development of His kingdom which that sacrifice is to introduce. "And other sheep I have which are not of this flock;" souls ready for His truth among other nations. "Them also," he adds, "I must bring, and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd."

Christ the door.

99. Slightly varying the picture, He tells them, moreover, that He is not only the shepherd, but the door of the flock. By him men enter into the fold. Entering by Him men find *safety*, "they shall be saved;" *liberty*, "they shall go in and out;" *plenty*, "and they shall find pasture." Freedom, sufficiency, and salvation are combined in Christ; and all are imparted to those who believe.

All deemed by the people extravagance.

100. To the worldly-minded hearers of our Lord these words conveyed no meaning. Instead of inspiration, they saw in them nothing but extravagance. "He hath a devil," said they, "and is mad." But others were irresistibly attracted to Him. They heard *words* which no other man could utter, and they saw *works* which no other man could do. On another

occasion during this same visit, His words became yet more decided. (John x. 22–42.)

101. New divisions arose; the life of Christ was every day endangered, and His ministry disturbed; He therefore left Jerusalem, and went with His disciples into Peræa.

Christ retires into Peræa.

102. During the two months Christ remained in the neighborhood of Jerusalem, He delivered the parable of the good Samaritan (Luke x.); visited Martha and Mary at Bethany; a second time taught the disciples to pray, and received the report of the seventy, who were now returned from their mission into Samaria. (Luke x.)* Our Lord's remarks on receiving this report are highly instructive.

Summary.

103. Christ's stay in Peræa was shortened by a message from the family at Bethany. With this family, who resided within a mile and a half of Jerusalem, Christ seems to have formed, during his protracted visit to the city, a close and affectionate intimacy; and it is expressly said, "that Jesus loved them." The brother of the family was taken ill, and the sisters sent messengers into Peræa (about two days' journey) to inform our Lord of their affliction. Our Lord replied by informing their messenger that Lazarus should not be separated from his sisters by death; and having dismissed him, Christ remained for two days longer in the district to which He had gone. In the meantime Lazarus died. Christ announced the fact of his death to the disciples, and then proposed to go to Bethany and visit him. This resolution alarmed the dis-

Recalled to Bethany.

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* This is the order of Wieseler and Robinson, and seems on the whole to agree best with the history. Neander supposes that our Lord spent part of the interval between the feast of Tabernacles and the feast of the Dedication in Galilee, and that He there received the report of the seventy. Though adopting this arrangement, however, he seems to prefer the order given above.

ciples; who had not forgotten the hostility of the Sanhedrim, and Thomas deemed the result so hopeless, that he supposed their return to Jerusalem identical with a resolution to die with their friend. (John xi. 7–15.) Christ, however, proceeds to dispel their fears. He reminds them that they still had His personal guidance, and that walking in His light they were secure.

Raises Lazarus.

104. He returns at length to Bethany; the anxieties of the sisters are calmed. Jesus weeps at the grave of His friend, and offers audibly His prayer and thanksgiving to His Father; not for His own sake, or as if this prayer and answer were something peculiar, but for the sake of the Jews; and closes the scene by raising the dead man from his grave. (John xi.) The miracle is so striking, that the disciples had their faith strengthened, and many, even of the Jews, believed.

Christ the resurrection and the life.

105. The narrative of this chapter is one of the most touching and instructive in Scripture, as a revelation in relation to Christ, and in relation to individual experience. Here, for the first time, He is himself clearly revealed as "the resurrection and life." Parables and particular passages had involved this truth—here it is stated plainly, under circumstances peculiarly affecting.

The Resurrection and the Life! He has *announced* it. He is himself the *pledge* of it. It is to His *death* we *owe* it. It is His *power* that achieves it. Mark how these thoughts are illustrated in different parts of Scripture. "Marvel not at this, for the hour is coming when they that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of man, and shall come forth." "God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He hath loved us, even when we were dead in sins, quickened us together with Christ." "Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead." "The first man is of the earth earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven; and as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." "This is the will of Him that sent me, that every one that seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day." "I am the resurrection and the life." "Lo! this is our God; we have waited for Him; we will be glad, and rejoice in his salvation." (John v. 28; Eph. ii. 4,5; 1 Cor. xv. 21, 47–49; John vi. 40; xi. 25; Is. xxv. 9.)

Lessons in relation to Christ's proceedings.

106. Looking at the fifteenth verse of the chapter, how instructive to notice the facts it contains. Christ's movements regulated by regard for the welfare of His disciples; all done for the increase of their faith—the quality on which, mainly, Christian excellence depends—all done in a way contrary to their hopes; ("If thou hadst been here, my brother had not died;") one disciple suffering for the benefit of his brethren: Christ, never too confident of His power, nor too late in His movements ("Let us go unto *him*"). These are truths illustrated in every Christian's life, but never more impressively than in this touching history.

The influence of this miracle on the movements of the Sanhedrim.

107. The raising of Lazarus exerted an important influence in hastening the final catastrophe of the life of our Lord. On the one hand, it led many to believe; and, on the other, it induced the ruling party to take active measures against Him. They were satisfied that their sentence of excommunication against His followers had failed, and they began to fear, that if they let Him alone, all men would believe. A meeting of the Sanhedrim was therefore summoned, and the most turbulent race that ever lived made the peace of the state their plea for decisive measures. "If this thing go on," said they, "the people will proclaim Him king, and the Romans will come and take away our place and nation."

(John xi. 48–50.) Caiaphas, the high priest, concurring in this view, decided (in language of prophetic import) that it was better that one should die for all, than that the nation should perish." It was therefore resolved, on pretence of the safety of the state, that Jesus must die; and an order was issued for seizing His person, in the event of His attending the coming festival of the Passover.

Christ retires again to Peræa.

08. After this decision Christ retired again to Peræa, where great multitudes followed Him. Many miracles were wrought by Him during this journey, and the details of a few are recorded. His chief teaching, however, was by parables. The whole narrative is instructive, and may be found between the thirteenth and nineteenth chapters of Luke. Twice, during those four months, He foretells His own death: first, as recorded in Luke xiii. 33; again, in Luke xviii. 31–35; in the second case, with most remarkable minuteness and pathos. Again also, a third time, in reply to the ambitious request of the mother of James and John, where He speaks of His baptism of suffering, and of His giving His life "a ransom for many;" an expression which itself suggests the vicarious and atoning character of His death. (Matt. xx. 28.)

In relation to the law, obedience is love.

109. In relation to the law, Christ taught, as we have seen, its spirituality and its comprehensiveness. It is summed up in love—love to God and love to man; and its requirements can be fulfilled by no other obedience. We are now prepared to appreciate the meaning and significancy of faith.

In relation to Christ, obedience is faith.

110. In relation to Himself, Christ teaches, as we now see, that He is the Saviour of our race, the hope of the guilty, the bread of the perishing, the life of the dead; that to save us He gives His life for ours, and that to profit by His work we need to believe. The nature of the relation of His death to our salvation belongs properly to another place; the truth to

be noticed here, is the connection between salvation and faith.

All blessings dependent on faith.

111. All the blessings of the Gospel are represented as depending upon this principle. Is sin cancelled? Are we accepted as though we were guiltless? "Being justified *by faith*, we have peace with God." Are we exhorted to be holy? We must be "sanctified *by faith* that is in Christ." Do we need consolation? "In Him *believing* we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." Do we live? It is "by the *faith* of the Son of God." Do we walk? "We walk by *faith*." Do we stand? "We stand by *faith*." Do we conquer? "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our *faith*." In a word, without it there is no salvation. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." It is to man all that Christ is; for it is by faith only that we accept Him for the purposes which He is sent to accomplish. He is God's unspeakable gift, therefore receive Him. He is the refuge of the guilty, enter into Him. He is the prophet, listen to His voice. He is priest—trust His sacrifice. He is king—obey His commands. He is our brother man—cherish towards Him a brother's love. He is the mighty God, reverence and adore Him. These feelings are faith, and by faith we are saved.

It is to man all that Christ is.

Unbelief the condemning sin.

112. Unbelief, on the other hand, is the damning sin. All else may be forgiven, but not this. It is contempt of Divine law; "for this is God's "*commandment*, that we should believe on the name of His Son, Jesus Christ." (1 John iii. 23.) It is the denial of the truth of God; of His wisdom and love. It involves the rejection of mercy and the exclusion of hope. "He that despised Moses' law, died without mercy under two or three witnesses; of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath

trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and hath done despite to the Spirit of grace." "He that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark xvi. 16; Heb. x. 28, 29.)

SECT. 5.—TEACHING BY PARABLES.

Parables first used by our Lord.

113. Some few weeks before our Lord fed the five thousand, and delivered His discourse in the synagogue of Capernaum, but many months after the commencement of His ministry, He seems to have introduced a new and very favorite form of teaching; new to Him, but very familiar to Jewish teachers. We refer to His parables.

Advantage of this kind of teaching.

114. The advantage of this kind of teaching is, that it tests men's dispositions, (Matt. xiii. 13,) and is well adapted to give a figurative exhibition of truth before it is intended clearly to reveal it. It is often useful, moreover, in gaining a man's judgment against himself; and even where there is no need of concealment, it attracts the attention of men, who might otherwise have remained indifferent. It is for one or other of these purposes that the parable is employed with such frequency by our Lord.

Rules for the interpretation of parables.

115. For the interpretation of these parables, one or two rules may be mentioned as important.

It may be gathered from the place which this form of teaching occupies in His public ministry, that parables must never be made the first or sole ground of doctrine. Doctrines otherwise proved may be illustrated or confirmed by them, but beyond this we must not go. It is a modification of this rule, that whatever in them is abstruse must be interpreted according to those parts of Scripture which are plain.

The great rules of interpretation are: Ascertain the scope, either by reference to the context or to parable passages; seize the one truth which the parallel is intended to set forth, and let those parts of the parable which are explained be explained in harmony with it. Any interpretation of a particular part which is not consistent with the great truth which the whole represents, or which does not tend to elucidate it, reject; and even of doctrines which *are* consistent with the general design, no one must be received that does not agree with the *clear* revelations of Scripture.

How far all the parts of a parable are significant.

116. How far the different parts of a parable may be interpreted and applied, is an interesting question. From the specimens of parable interpretation which are given in Scripture, it may be gathered that we must avoid both the extreme of supposing that only the general design is to be regarded, and the extreme of insisting upon every clause as having a double and spiritually significant meaning. In the parable of the sower, for example, which our Lord himself interpreted, the moral application descends to the minutest particulars. (Matt. xiii. 47.) The birds, the stony ground, the thorns have all their meaning; and, as Tholuck has remarked, it may be said generally, that the similitude of a parable is perfect in proportion as it is on all sides rich in practical applications. In the parables of the tares and of the unjust steward, again, not all the circumstances are explained. "While men slept," in the first, (Matt. xiii. 25,) and the phrase "I cannot dig, and to beg I am ashamed," in the second, have neither of them any application in the inspired explanation of our Lord. (Luke xvi. 3.)

Provided, however, we keep in view the great lesson of a parable, and interpret all its parts in harmony with that lesson, there is little danger of our abusing this form of instruction. If it be abused, the habit of mind which such a practice tends to strengthen must prove mischievous;

either leading into serious errors, or tempting us to leave uncultivated one of the richest fields of Scriptural study.

117. We come now to the first parable. Our Lord's first miracle taught the superiority of His Gospel as compared with the law; His first discourse, the nature and requirements of His kingdom, and the means of its establishment. His first parable is also, in its own way, solemn and appropriate.

Christ's first parable.

It was spoken in Galilee. An atrocious act of Pilate's which had excited attention at the time, induced some of our Lord's hearers to ask His opinion upon it; hinting, probably, that as the blood of the murdered Galileans had been mingled with their sacrifices, they had been guilty of some enormous sin. Christ rebuked this uncharitable spirit; reminded them that in the chastisement which had overtaken others, they might see an image of the chastisement that might one day overtake themselves; and intimated that however true it might be that the sufferings of the human race are the consequence of transgression, particular individual suffering may not be the consequence of individual sin. Such events (he shows them by another instance) are rather calls to repentance to those who are spared, than evidences of the special anger of God or of the peculiar guilt of the sufferers. (Luke xiii. 1-9.)

After this warning he again brings the side of grace prominently forward; and while he represents the punishment of neglected opportunity as certain, he reminds them that punishment is deferred that men may turn and live.

His first parable, therefore, teaches the long-suffering and severity of God. In the world, as a fig-tree in a vineyard, the Jewish people were established that they might bear fruit to God's glory. *Fruit* they were to bear, the organic produce, that is, of the inner life; not something growing as an excrescence, or merely attached from without. On coming to seek for this

Its meaning.

fruit, the owner found none; poisonous fruit (ἔργα πονηρά) he might have found; withered fruit (ἔργα νεϰρά), fruit fair perchance in appearance, but not of living growth, he might also have found; but good fruit (ἔργα ϰαλα, ἔργα ἀγἂϑά) there was none. For three years—a time quite sufficient to have exhausted His patience and prove the nature of the tree; or perhaps intimating by this expression that under three dispensations He, the great proprietor, had visited them, that of the law, that of the prophets and His own; or again by the appeals of natural law, and of written law, and now, last of all, of His gospel—for three years (at all events) have I come, says He, seeking fruit and finding none. "Cut it down; for why should it, in addition to its worthlessness, injure and impoverish the ground" (ϰαταργεῖ ϰαὶ τὴν γῆν)? At the request of the dresser of the vineyard, however, it is spared for another year, and the interval is spent in digging around and manuring; in the appliance, in short, of all those means which in God's dealings with man are generally multiplied immediately before they are forever withdrawn.

The general principle involved.

And such is the general principle of God's procedure Before the flood the world had Noah, a preacher of righteousness; and one hundred and twenty years were allowed them to return. Before the catastrophe of the captivity the Jews had most of their greatest prophets, who for many years warned and instructed them. Before the final destruction of Jerusalem, they had the ministry of Christ and his apostles.

Lessons.

How affecting that God should thus threaten, that He may not chastise, and chastise that He may not condemn. Postponements of judgment are intended as mercies; but they may be abused to the aggravation of our guilt. As God thus deals with nations, so He deals with individual inquirers. All abused privilege will ultimately magnify divine love and justice: love in bestowing it, and justice in the consequent ruin that our abuse of it will have incurred.

Compared with one of his latest parables.

118. The significance of this parable is increased by comparing it with one of those which our Lord delivered during the few last days of His life. Here it is the fig-tree to which the Jews are compared; a tree not generally planted in vineyards, but suffered to grow in the hedge, and even there expected to be fruitful. (Luke xiii. 7.) In the other parable the tree is the vine, which seems chosen to represent the value of the plant, and the care required in cultivating it.* (Luke xx. 9.) The image is also in frequent use in the Old Testament, so that it is doubly appropriate; itself familiar and connecting the two dispensations.† There, too, the husbandman is the planter as well as owner, and the whole is let out to vine-dressers. It was solemnly entrusted to them, and they were to bring a proportion of its fruit in its season. He afterwards sent his servants to receive his share; but one they slew, and another they ill treated, till at length he was constrained to send his own son, his only son, his well-beloved: phrases all intended to indicate, as strongly as possible, the difference between him and the servants he had previously sent—the worth, and dignity, and dearness of his person. "And when the husbandmen saw him, they said, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours; and they cast him out of the vineyard ('without the gate'), and slew him."

The moral and the application are immediate. The three evangelists all notice the exasperation of the Pharisees and Scribes (the vine-dressers of the parable); and Christ only stays to intimate, by a change of the figure, that after all the purpose of God will be achieved; the vineyard will yet yield its fruit, and the rejected stone become the head of the corner.

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* Nulla possessio pretiosior, nulla majorem operam requirens.

† Deut. xxxii.; Ps. lxxx.; Isa. v.; xxvii.; Jer. ii.; Ezek xv.

Among the first and last parables, therefore, which our Lord spoke, were two in which He set forth man's profitlessness and guilt, God's severity and love; truths at the foundation of our faith.

Parables divided so as to represent the nature and progress of the kingdom of God.

119. The whole of the parables of our Lord belong more or less completely to the doctrine of His kingdom; and they may be arranged so as to exhibit its progress, its peculiarities, and its final development.

1. Parables on the progress of the kingdom of Christ.

The sower. Matt. xiii. 3; Luke viii. 5; Mark iv. 3.
The tares. Matt. xiii. 24.
The mustard seed. Matt. xiii. 31; Mark iv. 31; Luke xiii. 18, 19.
The leaven. Matt, xiii. 33; Luke xiii. 20, 21.
The hidden treasure. Matt. xiii. 44.
The pearl. Matt. xiii. 45, 46.
The net. Matt. xiii. 47

2. Call to enter the kingdom of Christ.

The feast. Luke xiv. 16–24.
The royal marriage. Matt. xxii. 1–14.

3. Moral requisites for entering the kingdom of Christ.

A. Anti-pharisaic.
The lost sheep. Matt. xviii. 12; Luke xv. 4,
The lost piece of money. Luke xv. 10.
The prodigal son. Luke xv. 11–22.
Strife for the first places at feasts. Luke xiv. 7–11.

B. Positive requisites.
The sower. Matt. xiii. 3–23.
The wedding garment. Matt. xxii. 12.
The two sons. Matt. xxi. 28.
The tower and the warring king. Luke xiv. 28–33.

4. The true spirit of the kingdom of Christ.

A. Forgiveness and love.
The good Samaritan. Luke x. 25–37.
The unforgiving servant. Matt. xviii. 23; Luke vii. 41.

B. Prayer.
  The importunate friend. Luke xi.
  The importunate widow. Luke xviii. 1.

C. The right use of worldly possessions.
  The rich fool. Luke xii. 7, 16–21.
  The unjust steward. Luke xvi. 1–13.
  The rich man and Lazarus. Luke xvi. 19–31.

D. The Spirit of the kingdom under the character of prudence and watchfulness.
  The householder. Matt. xxiv. 45–51.
  The ten virgins. Matt. xxv.
  The pounds. Luke xix. 2–28; Matt. xxv.

5. Activity in the kingdom of Christ.

A. Its source.
  The vine. John xv. 1.
  The barren fig-tree. Luke xiii. 6.
  The wicked vine-dressers. Matt. xxi. 33–41.
  The talents. Matt. xxv. 14–30.

B. Favor independent of works.
  The laborers. Matt. xx. 1–16.

C. Duties belonging to man, results to God.
  The ripening corn. Mark iv. 26.

We but indicate the significance and meaning of these parables. No paraphrase can exhaust or fairly represent them. They may be studied and restudied. There is nothing more profound or instructive in all the teachings of our Lord.

Each parable contains only a partial view of truth.

120. There are two peculiarities more in these parables which need to be understood, in order that we may justly appreciate them. Most of them exhibit but partial views of truth, some phase or corner, and not the whole; we must therefore compare them—and some of them are prophetic.

Illustrated.

The parable of the ten virgins, for example, sets forth the duty of a *waiting* Christian. (Matt. xxv.) The five wise are those who are prudently and thoughtfully conscious of their responsibilities and office (φρόνιμοι). The five foolish have only an external profession of Christian life; life in outward manifestation only, not fed from any internal fountain. There is in both, even among the faithful, a certain acquiescence in present things; though between the two classes there is the wide distinction, that the case of the wise is remediable, while that of the unwise is without remedy.

Hence the importance of comparing them.

Comparing this parable with the marriage of the king's son, where the unworthy guest actually finds admission to the marriage supper, and is only *thence* cast out, (Matt. xxii 1–14,) we gather that there is a church on earth with a feast of blessings, as well as a church in heaven, and that some will be found in the one, and not in the other.

Comparing this parable of the virgins with the parable of the ten talents which immediately follows it, we gather that Christians are not only to WAIT for Christ, but to WORK for Him; and that not only is decay and declension in the spiritual life condemned, but also sloth and idleness in our outward and earthly engagements. The two compared may also suggest, that the contemplative and the active character make up the complete Christian; and that the one element may predominate in one man, and the other in another.

Comparing the two parables of Matthew and Luke, other minor instructive facts appear. (Matt. xxv.; Luke xix.) To every man these talents were given according to his individual ability; the privileges of grace not destroying the peculiarities of personal character, nor bringing all to the same standard, but rather filling the vessel which is formed by the natural gift.

In Matthew the faithful servant says: "Behold I have gained;" while in Luke his language is, "Thy pound hath gained:" the two accounts making up the acknowledgment of Paul, "I, yet not I, but the grace of Christ in me." The servant who is punished, moreover, is not one who, like the unjust steward, has wasted his master's goods. Nor has he spent his portion in riotous living like the Prodigal. Nor was he ten thousand talents in debt, like the unmerciful servant. Still his guilt was great and peculiar; and the lesson taught is, that men are answerable not only for positive sin, but for the neglect of privilege. The pound wrapped in the napkin, and the talent hid in the earth, are subjects of just condemnation.

Nor is it undeserving of notice, that while the virgins sinned through *over-confidence*, the man with the one talent sinned through *distrust*. To doubt our Lord's forgiving love, and his gracious acceptance of our work, with all its faults, if done from a true heart, is itself sinful, and the cause of sin; as powerful a cause perhaps as the excessive confidence, and consequent indifference of his sleeping church. To both classes Scripture has words of counsel; to the second, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil. ii. 12); and to the first, "Ye are not come unto the mount that might not be touched, and that burned with fire; nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest. . . . But ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God . . . . and to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel." (Heb. xii. 18–24.)

What a fearful picture does this parable of the talents give us of the condemned sinner, half-cowering and half-defying; and even on his own ground how justly is he condemned! The opportunities and the place which he had left unused, and has therefore forfeited, God (as His rule is) hands over to another. And not only is the talent forfeited, but the unprofitable servant is himself cast into outer darkness. While within there is joy, and light, and feasting, to celebrate the master's return, the darkness without is his portion, the blessedness he might have gained forever lost.

Study, therefore, the truths and the parables of the Gospel as a whole. So shall we gain juster conceptions of their meaning, and a clearer insight into the love and wisdom which the Bible reveals.

Parable sometimes prophetic.

121. The second peculiarity of the parables of Christ, is their prophetic character. They contain descriptions both of the past and of the future; of human nature in all time, and of the progress and development of the kingdom of God.

The parables of the thirteenth of Matthew, for example, are individually highly instructive; and they are no less so in their connection as embodying a complete history of the church.

Illustrated in the parables 13th Matt.

History of the church.

In the first parable, that of the sower, we have the history of the commencement of the Gospel. It is descriptive of our Saviour's own work; His instructions scattering the seed of the kingdom by every mountain, and stream, and city of His native land, with most diversified results. Some heard, but understood not His sayings. Others heard with joy, and gave some fair promise of blossom and fruit; but the seed perished because it had no root, no fixed vital principle in them. In others the seed was choked by the cares of the world, or by stealthy attachment to its pleasures. Others, again, received it, and bore fruit, thirty, sixty, or an hundred fold: a distinction of character retained throughout Scripture, which tells us that there are little children, and young men, and fathers in Christ, (1 John ii. 13,) as there are in the world the ungodly, the sinner, and the scornful.

And this fulfillment might have been witnessed and studied in the lifetime of our Lord. He well said to His disciples: "Know ye not this parable; how then can ye know all parables?" (Mark iv. 13.)

In the parable of the tares, He gives the history of the church in the ages immediately following His own. Corruption and evil sprang up almost as early as truth, and ripened more quickly.*

The *third* parable exhibits the rapid growth of the visible church. The seed speedily becomes a tree, so strong, that others made it their shelter: "The birds of the air came and dwelt in the branches thereof."

This union was found signally unfavorable to the purity of truth. At first the visible church had been well nigh identical with the invisible; but now whole nations are nominally converted in one day; and at length, in the dark ages, the most fearful crimes are perpetrated under the name, and with the sanction of what was called religion.

Even then, however, the true spirit existed somewhere, though dormant. In the mass, however lifeless, there was concealed a little leaven, working unseen, still retaining its energy and power, and gradually assimilating the lump to itself. In the fullness of time (as the fourth parable teaches) the whole will be leavened, and the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord.

But how is this result to be achieved? A question answered in the fifth and sixth parables of this chapter.

Some will find the truth who have not sought it, and these are the accidental treasure-finders. Others will find it as the result of diligent search.

The *fifth* parable represents the man who stumbles unexpectedly upon the Gospel, and recognizes its worth. His judgment and his feelings are all interested in the discovery. So is it with the converted prodigal, with the man reclaimed by some awakening dispensation of the providences of God, or by the earnest address of the preacher. So was it with the Reformation of the sixteenth century. So also with the revivals of true religion in modern times, with all epidemic movements of piety (if they may be so called) as distinguished from the earnest persevering spirit which the next parable suggests. Nor is it insignificant to notice, that the man who thus lights upon truth, buys the field in which the treasure is found. Captivated with religion and the blessings it confers, he finds at first a difficulty in distinguishing between the accidental and the real; between its adjuncts and its essentials. In time he is able to say, "Grace be *with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ* in sincerity;" (Eph. vi. 24;) but this sentiment is the fruit of expanded charity; and his first feeling is somewhat exclusive and restricted.

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* The seeds of corruption were sown secretly; unworthy members being admitted *unawares*. The evil is confined to no age; but requires habitual watchfulness in our own. "While men slept, the enemy came and sowed tares." J. N. B.

The *sixth* parable describes another class of converts, already pretty numerous in our age, and likely to be largely augmented — the *truth-seeker;* the merchantman dealing in goodly pearls. It is his business to seek the goodliest. Continuously and determinately he employs his skill. At length he succeeds; and, finding true piety, the kingdom of God, to be the pearl of great price, he secures it with no less firmness and decision than the treasure-finder, but with less boisterous joy; and with the advantage of purchasing only the pearl, not also the field that contained it.

The unity and the love of the last days of the church will depend much on the general diffusion in our age of intelligent piety. The careless and the ignorant may be surprised into the Gospel, and be blessed and saved by it; but they are not likely to take the Gospel only. There are sure to be in their faith human admixtures of prejudice, of party feeling. The age of pearl-*seekers* will be the brighest for the church.

The *last* parable closes the scene: it foretells the universal spread of the Gospel, and intimates that not till the end of the dispensation will the separation of the wicked and the holy be complete.

The whole of the parables, it will be noticed, admit and receive a beautiful personal application to individual character; but they are, in the opinion of many thoughtful men, no less applicable to distinct eras in the history of the church.*

Prophetic parables.

122. Especially does this prophetic character belong to the later parables of our Lord: the laborers in the vineyard, the ten pounds, the wicked husbandmen, the marriage of the king's son, the ten virgins, and the talents—all spoken within the last days of His life—contain intimation of His second coming; and some of them of the decisions of the judgment.

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* Alexander Knox has given this view of the parables of this chapter; and his remarks have been made an illustration of the general truth. The volume of Mr. Maurice on the Parables is rich in happy illustrations of Scripture truth. See also Storr, Neander, Lisco, and Trench.

CHAPTER V.

CHRIST THE PRIEST AND SACRIFICE.

§ 1. Christ goes up to Jerusalem to be crucified.

§ 2. The Church and the institution of the Last Supper.

§ 3. The denial of Peter, and the Crucifixion of our Lord.

§ 4. Christ crucified Afresh—or the feelings that actuated his murderers common to every age.

§ 5. Christ our Propitiation and Priest—the influence of the cross on God and on man.

OUR LORD'S PUBLIC ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM, AND SUBSEQUENT TRANSACTIONS FOR FIVE DAYS.

Date.	Matthew.	Mark.	Luke.	John.	Place.	Ord. Nar.	Miracle.	Discourse.	Parable.
A.D. 30	xxi. 1–11	xi. 1–11	xix. 29–44	xii. 12–19	Bethany Jer.	Our Lord enters Jerusalem.			
	xxi. 14–17								
Apr. 1	xxi. 12–13	xi. 12–19	xix. 45–8	—	in Bethany.		The barren fig-tree.		
Mondy	xxi. 18–19		xxi. 37–38						
2 Tues.			”	—	Jerusalem.	The cleansing of the Temple.			
3 Wed	xxi. 20–22	xi. 20–26	—	—	in Bethany.		The fig-tree withers away.		
	xxi 23, 32	xi. 27–33	xx. 1–8	—	Jerusalem.	Christ's authority questioned.			The two sons.
	xxi. 33–46	xii. 1–12	xx. 9–19	—	”				The wicked husbandman.
	xxii. 1–44	—	—	—	”				The marriage of king's son.
	xxii. 15–33	xii. 13–27	xx. 20–40	—	”			Question on tribute: and on resurrection.	
	xxii. 34–40	xii. 28–34	—	—	”			A lawyer questions Jesus. Two commandments.	
	xxii. 41–6	xii. 35–37	xx. 41–4	—	”			Christ the Son of David.	
	xxiii. 1–12	xii. 38–9	xx. 45–6	—	”			Warnings against the Scribes and Pharisees.	
	xxiii. 13–39	xii. 40	xx. 47	—	”			Woes and lamentations over Jerusalem.	
	—	xii. 41–4	xxi. 1–4	—	”			The widow's mite.	
	—	—	—	xii. 20–50	”	Greeks desire to see Jesus: Jews' unbelief.			
	—	—	—	—	”		A voice from heaven. (John xii. 28.)		
	xxiv. 1–14	xiii. 1–13	xxi. 5–19	—	”		Christ foretells persecution: takes leave of temple.		
	xxiv. 15–42	xiii. 14–37	xxi. 20–36	—	Mt. of Olives.			On signs of Christ's coming.	
	xxiv. 43–51	—	—	—	”			On day of judgment and watchfulness.	
Wed.	xxv. 1–30	—	—	—	”				The ten virgins. Five talents.
Evg.	xxv. 31–46	—	—	—	”			On scenes of the Judgment day.	
Night.	xxvi. 1–16	xiv. 1–11	xxii. 1–6	xii. 2–8	Jerusa. Beth.	Rulers conspire. Supper at Bethany. Judas.			

FOURTH PASSOVER: OUR LORD'S PASSION, &c., TILL THE END OF THE JEWISH SABBATH. TWO DAYS.

Date.	Matthew.	Mark.	Luke.	John.	Place.	Ord. Nar.	Miracle.	Discourse.	Parable.
4Thur. Eveng.	xxvi. 17–20	xiv. 12–17	xxii. 7–18, [24–30		Beth. Jerus.	The Passover. Contention among the twelve.			
	—	—		xiii. 1–20	Jerusalem.	Christ washes the disciples' feet.			
	xxvi. 21–5	xiv. 18–21	xxii. 21–23	xiii. 21–35	"		Christ points out the traitor, who withdraws.		
	xxvi. 26–29	xiv. 22–5	xxii. 31–38	xiii. 36–38	"		Christ foretells the fall of Peter.		
	xxvi. 31–35	xiv. 27–31	xxii. 19, 20	1 Cor. xi. 23-5	"	Lord's Supper.			
	—	—	—	xiv. 1–31	"	Christ comforts his disciples. The Holy Spirit promised.			
	—	—	—	xv. 1. xvi. 33	"			Christ the true vine, &c.	
	—	—	—	xvii. 1–26	"			Christ's last prayer with his disciples.	
Midn.	xxvi. 30–36–[46	xiv. 26–32–42	xxii. 39–46	xviii. 1	Mt. of Olives.	The agony in the garden.			
Midn.	xxvi. 47–56	xiv. 43–52	xxii. 47–53	xviii. 2–12	"	Christ betrayed. Strikes his enemies to the ground. (John xviii. 6.)			
							Heals the ear of Malchus.		
Apr. 5	xxvi. 57–8 [69–75	xiv. 53–54 [66–70	xxii. 54–62	xviii. 13–18 [25–27	Jerusalem.	Christ before Caiaphas. Peter thrice denies him.			
Frid.	xxvi. 59–68	xiv. 55–65	xxii. 63–71	xviii. 19–24		Christ before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrim. Is condemned.			
Morn.	xxvii. 11–14	xv. 1–5	xxiii. 1–12	xviii. 28–38		The Sanhedrim leads him to Pilate. Jesus before Herod.			
Hour,	xxvii. 15–26	xv. 6–15	xxiii. 13–25	xviii. 39, 40		Pilate seeks to clear him. Barabbas demanded.			
5, 6	xxvii. 26–30	xv. 15–19	—	xix. 1–3		Pilate delivers him to death. Scourged and mocked.			
7–8	—	—		xix. 4–16	Jerusalem.	Pilate, after again seeking to release him, delivers him to be crucified.			
	xxvii. 3–10	—	—	Ac. 1. 18, 19	"	Judas repents, and hangs himself.			
	xxvii. 31–34	xv. 20–23	xxiii. 26–33	xix. 16–19	"	Jesus led away to be crucified.			
8–9	xxvii. 35–38	xv. 24–28	xxiii. 33, 4, 8	xix. 18–24	"	The Crucifixion.			
	xxvii. 39–44	xv. 29–32	xxiii. 35–37 [39–43	xix. 25–27	"	The Jews mock at Jesus. He commends his mother to John			
12–13	xxvii. 45–50	xv. 33–37	xxiii. 44–46	xix. 28–30	"		Darkness prevails. Christ expires on the Cross.		
	xxvii. 51–56	xv. 38–41	xxiii. 45. 47–9	—	"		The veil rent. Graves opened. The women at the Cross.		
							After his resurrection many rise.		
5, 6	xxvii. 57–61	xv. 42–47	xxiii. 50–56	xix. 31–42	"	The taking down from the Cross. The burial.			
Apr. 6	xxvii. 62–66	—	—	—	"	The watch at the sepulchre. Saturday after sunset.			

CHAPTER V.

SECT. 4.—CHRIST GOES TO JERUSALEM TO BE CRUCIFIED.

Christ in Peræa.

1. To avoid the snares of His enemies, and to secure a short season of undisturbed intercourse with His disciples, Jesus retired to the village of Ephraim, in the desert of Judæa, and thence to the valley of the Jordan. (John xi. 54.) Here He spent some time delivering the parables which are recorded between the tenth and thirteenth chapters of Luke, and preparing the minds of His disciples for the closing scenes of His life.

As He knew that His return to the city would expose Him to the machinations of the Pharisees, it may be asked why He did not remain still longer in secret. Might He not by such a course have carried on the religious training of His disciples, and so have prepared a greater number of agents to disseminate His truth.

Resolves to go up to the Passover.

2. This question is natural; and if Christ had been a mere teacher of truth like other prophets, it would not be easy to answer it. He, however, was not only a teacher; He was to become a sacrifice. He had been manifested, in order that in Him all previous revelations might be fulfilled; and especially that the types of the law and the predictions of the prophets might have in His death their appropriate realization. He did not *seek* this termination of His course; but went to meet it, in the execution of His calling, in obedience to

the Divine will, and with a love that was prepared for any suffering. As therefore a few months before He had "set His face steadfastly to go to Jerusalem," so now He leaves Peræa with the same purpose, and with a clear perception of the final issue of His journey.

Reaches Bethany.

3. On the way He heals the blind men near Jericho, visits Zacchæus, and at length, six days before the Passover, arrives at Bethany.

Crowds visit Him there.

The fame of Christ had already reached the ears of the thousands of Jews who were now gathering from all quarters to the Holy City. The resurrection of Lazarus, in particular, had created a great sensation; and as soon as the sabbath-law allowed, crowds flocked to Bethany to see Jesus, and to convince themselves, by inquiry and other evidence, of the reality of the miracle. The enthusiasm on our Lord's behalf was so strong, that the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death. (John xii. 10.)

His triumphant entry into Jerusalem.

Monday morning.

4. Attended by His disciples and the multitude that had gathered to Bethany, Christ set out for Jerusalem. Many others advanced from the city to meet Him, and in the increasing throng Christ mounted an ass which His disciples had found in a village near, and so rode towards the gates. He thus aptly represented the peaceable character of His kingdom, and its total rejection of worldly display, as foretold by Zachariah. With joyous shouts He was introduced into the city, while on all sides was heard the cry: "Hosannah, blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord."

As he descended the Mount of Olives, before entering the city, he saw it and wept over it; and uttered a prophecy, which its later history amply verified. (Luke xix. 43, 44)

5. The raising of Lazarus had, as might have been ex-

pected, hastened the resolution of the Sanhedrim to put Jesus to death. The time and mode of His execution depended on the manner of His arrival in the city; and the Sanhedrim had already ordered that, if any one ascertained His place of abode, they should be informed of it, that measures might be taken for His arrest. (John xi. 53–57.) The triumphant entry of Christ, and the shouts of the multitude, was a severe blow to their party. "See," said they in anger, "how ye prevail nothing; behold the world is gone after Him" (xii. 19). They determine, therefore, to make use of craft in order to ensnare Him; and though they had already gathered abundant material from His labors in Galilee and Jerusalem to sustain the charge they were seeking to bring against Him, namely, that He claimed to be the Messiah, they thought it better to seek some new facts that might either justify an accusation on the ground of the Jewish law, or enable them to present Him as a culprit to the Roman authorities.

Plans of the Pharisees.

6. They first of all sent some of their number to ask for the authority on which he founded his assumption. In reply, Christ admitted their right to ask the question, but seemed to doubt their ability to judge of the evidence that ought to guide their decision. He therefore tested them; and as they could not answer His question, He declined to tell them by what authority He performed His miracles and asserted His claim. (Matt. xxi. 23–27.)

They send to to ask his authority.

7. They then combined with the Herodians, and framed a question which, they thought, could hardly be answered without offending either priests or the politicians. "Master," said they, "we know that Thou art true. Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar or not?" (Matt. xxii. 15–21.) To deny the obligation would have subjected Him to accusation before the

With the Herodians they ask Him about tribute.

Roman tribunal; to acknowledge it, would have laid Him open to the charge of degrading the nation. Christ's reply indicated that it was not His office to alter the relations of civil society, and that "the things of Cæsar are to be given to Cæsar, and the things of God to God."

Both attempts therefore failed, and it was clearly impossible to render Christ justly amenable to either tribunal.

The question of the Sadducees on the resurrection.

8. A question asked by the Sadducees, with no political reference, however, received an equally decisive answer; and after that "they durst not ask Him any question." (Luke xx. 20–40.)

Engagements of this last week of his life.

The days of this week He spent in Jerusalem and at Bethany, in healing the blind and the lame, receiving their ascriptions of praise; and in delivering some of the most solemn of His parables. To this period belong the parables of the two sons, of the wicked husbandmen, of the kingdom, of the ten virgins, of the king's son, and of the talents.

To the same period also belong His predictions in reference to His second coming and the destruction of Jerusalem (Matt. xxiv. xxv.); His lamentation over the city (Matt. xxiii.); and His warning against the evil example of the Pharisees.

The miracle of the fig-tree.

The significant miracle is the cursing of the barren fig-tree; a symbolical representation of the approaching destiny of the city.

9. As in previous sections we have seen how He insists on the necessity of faith in His mission; so here He represents faith as proving itself by works (Matt. xxv. 31–46); and the importance of his doctrine on a working practical faith is enforced by representations of its connection with the decisions of the final judgment.

The visit of the Gentiles.

10. Among the visitors at Jerusalem there were a few Gentiles who had come to the knowledge of the true God, and were accustomed to worship

statedly at the feast. Christ's triumphal entry into the city awakened their attention, and made them desirous of speaking with Him. Not venturing to address Him personally, they sought the mediation of His disciples. They spoke to Philip, Philip to Andrew, and both together "told Jesus." (John xii. 20–22.)

Announces the effects of His death.

11. Seeing in these cases a prefiguring of the great results that were to flow from His own sufferings, Jesus said: "The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified," and then He set forth the necessity of His death. The seed corn abideth alone, said He, except it die; but when it dies it brings forth much fruit. (John xii. 23–31.) As *He*, therefore, was to be glorified through suffering, He then intimates to His disciples that the glory destined for them was to be secured only in the same way. "He that loveth his life (that is, makes this life his chief good) shall lose it; but he that hateth his life in this world (that is, deems it valueless in comparison with the interests of my kingdom) shall keep it unto life eternal."

His trouble of spirit and prayer.

12. "Now is my soul troubled." The kingdom which His death was about to establish, brought to His mind the struggles He must undergo before His death could be accomplished. His will, however, is unshaken, and the calmness of His mind undisturbed. I cannot say, "Father, save me from this hour. For this cause came I unto this hour, not to escape but to suffer it." To this completion of His work He had looked forward from the beginning; all His feelings and wishes, therefore, are now centred upon it, that God may be glorified among men by His death. "*Father, glorify thy name.*"

The answer.

13. As He uttered this prayer, the very outgoing of unselfish holiness, there came a voice from heaven, saying, "I have both glorified it, and

will glorify it again." His previous life, in which the perfect manifestation of God had been revealed, had glorified the name of the Father; and now His sufferings and their results were to glorify it yet more in the establishment of His kingdom.

Explained.

He now interprets the voice, and shows how God is to be glorified. "Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out; and I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." His sufferings are His victory; His work is finished by them, and they form the sentence of condemnation to the ungodly world; or, possibly, on this hour are suspended the interests of the world. This is the *crisis* of its destiny.

The last words of His ministry.

14. The *public* ministry of Christ now closes. His last words are a repetition of His earliest: "He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on Him that sent me; and he that seeth me, seeth Him that sent me. I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness. If any man hear my words and believe not, I judge him not; for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him; the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. (John xii. 34–48.) See John iii.

His last hours spent with His disciples.

15. Christ then left the temple, and spent the few hours that intervened between the end of His public ministry and His arrest, in instructing and comforting His disciples. In these conversations He displayed unequalled love and calmness, mingled with loftiness and humility. The last hours of His life He thus devoted, not to the comforting of His own mind, but of theirs; in preparing not Himself but them for His approaching departure and the severe conflicts which were

to accompany the formal commencement of His kingdom.

Plan of the Sanhedrim aided by Judas.

16. The Sanhedrim, as we have seen, had resolved upon His death; all that remained was to decide when and how it should be accomplished. An unexpected opportunity was soon afforded them by the proposition of Judas to deliver Him into their hands. (Luke xxii. 3–6.)

Charge on which Christ was put to death.

17. In the end Christ was condemned—not for interfering with the secular power, for He disclaimed all such interference; nor yet for any violation of the Jewish law, for no charge was brought against Him on that ground; but because He announced Himself to be the Messiah, (Matt. xxvi. 65,) in terms that implied equality with God. The connection of this fact with the innocence of His character and the completeness of His work will hereafter appear.

Sect. 2.—The Church—and the Supper of our Lord.

Christ regards His work as complete, and institutes the last supper.

18. The public ministry of Christ is now completed. He has delivered His last discourse, and the hour of His death is at hand. Having come to Jerusalem with a full knowledge of what awaited Him, he regards His work as virtually closed. He therefore administers to His disciples the last supper, gives them His parting counsel, and offers His intercessory prayer. In the narrative of these last hours of His life are some of the most touching exhibitions of His love.

Washes His disciples' feet.

19. The whole is introduced by a significant act: He washes the feet of His disciples; partly to remove those carnal expectations of an earthly kingdom which still cleaved to them, and partly to teach them by a specific act an important spiritual truth.

20. This act, doubtless, surprised more than one of

their number; but their reverence for Him prevented their resisting His will. Peter only impetuously exclaimed: "Lord, dost thou wash my feet?" and even when Christ told him that he should know the meaning of this act by and bye, he was not satisfied; till at length his self-will was rebuked by the declaration, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part in me." (John xiii.) As if Christ had said, "the renunciation of this spirit is essential to true discipleship; nor can any enter my communion unless spiritually purified by me." Alarmed at this assurance, Peter cries out, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." To which Christ answers, "That is too much. He that is washed and clean, needs but to wash his feet. Ye have already received the purifying principle of life through faith in me, and all that is now required is continued purification. Your natures are renewed, and what you require is rather outward than inward; the cleansing of the thoughts and feelings more than of the *man!*"

Peter's remonstrance, and Christ's explanation.

21. "Ye are clean," said He, "but not all." He thus prepared the way for the disclosure which He was about to make more plainly, that one of them should betray Him. At this announcement the disciples were all confounded. Each began to say, "Is it I?" nor did the one who was guilty ask the question till all had expressed, with the self-diffidence of true disciples, their suspicion of themselves. (John xiii. 10.) The Passover supper was now in progress, and Jesus answered their questions by intimating to John, who sat next Him at table, that the traitor was he to whom He was about to give a morsel of lamb or of bread, after He had dipped it in the sauce; and, having dipped, he gave it to Judas. This warning of our Lord's, coupled as it was with an act expressive of close intimacy, might have awakened the conscience of the traitor; failing to do this, it must

Indicates the traitor, who retires.

have made him anxious to leave such a fellowship, and to take the last step in his guilty course. He therefore went out immediately, and left the disciples with their Lord.

Christ glorified.

22 "And now," said Christ, "is the Son of man glorified," (the ideal of all holiness is about to be realized,) and God is about to be glorified in Him (the Divine holiness and love alike revealed); and if God be glorified in Him, God shall also glorify Him in himself, (shall raise Him, that is, to His own glory,) and shall straightway glorify Him. (John xiii. 31, 32.)

The supper instituted. Its significancy.

23. He then instituted the last supper at the close, and in the place, therefore, of the paschal feast, giving the disciples the bread as His body, and the wine as His blood. The one, corn bruised, that the eater might live; the other, the grape crushed, that those who partook of it might be refreshed—"His body broken for us;" "His blood, the seal and emblem of the new covenant, and given for many for the remission of sins."

And relation to baptism.

The *first* rite, therefore, which Christ observed and instituted, denotes the spiritual birth of the Christian. The *last* denotes the origin and the continued support of His spiritual life. Both are eminently simple, and highly significant.

His church His kingdom.

24. The nature of the church of Christ has already been intimated in connection with the repeated revelations of His kingdom. His church is His kingdom, and all in whose hearts He reigns are its members. But the meaning of this reign, its dependence above all on Himself and His priestly office, is gathered only from the closing chapters of St. John's Gospel. We shall therefore now notice the thoughts which are there expressed; comparing them especially with acts and expressions of our Lord on other occasions.

25. Under the law God was the *temporal ruler* of the Jews, as well as their invisible King. He prescribed not only the religious rites, but the civil regulations under which they were to live; and He enforced obedience by temporal sanctions.

The law temporal.

The worship enjoined under the law was also, to a great extent, *carnal.* It consisted in outward bodily acts; and though most of them had an inward meaning, which became distinct when they were explained by the Gospel, yet were they in themselves profitless—figures only of things to come.

The whole institution, moreover, was *local* and *temporary;* designed and adapted only for one people. It had for its center Jerusalem, and for its limits the borders of Palestine; so that no Gentile, even though a convert to Judaism, was admitted to *equal* privileges. What he did enjoy, moreover, was in the way of favor only, and not of right.

Local and partial.

26. Already has our Lord announced that His kingdom is spiritual; and, less distinctly, that it is to be one and universal—announcements which are brought out clearly in the closing chapters.

Christ's church spiritual and universal.

His is a *spiritual* kingdom and a *spiritual* church. It is formed in man's heart, and it admits of no other authority than is in accordance with this character. Our Lord therefore disclaims all right to interfere in temporal concerns; saying to one who wished Him to decide between him and his brother: Who made me a judge or a divider over you?" (Luke xii. 13.) He bids His disciples submit to the civil power; and so far from promising long life and worldly prosperity as the rewards of obedience, He prepared them for suffering and death. (Matt. xxviii. 20.)

Bestowing moreover equal privilege.

Illustrated.

So also, under this dispensation, worship is to be presented in spirit and in truth—not with many outward visible signs, as under the law, but with two simple ordinances; the whole subject to the law of Christ, with the general rules given afterwards by His apostles, ordaining that all things should "be done decently and in order," and "for the edifying of the church." (1 Cor. xiv. 12–40.)

As the old dispensation was intended for *one* nation, so is the new for *all* nations. The people of God is to comprise henceforth not children of Abraham merely after the flesh, but as many as embrace the Gospel.

All who thus embrace it are admitted to *equal* privileges. "One Lord, one faith, one baptism." (Eph. iv. 5.) "Neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature." (Gal. vi. 15.) Here there is "neither Greek nor Jew, Barbarian nor Scythian, bond nor free." (Col. iii. 11.)

The one church of Christ, therefore (His kingdom), is the whole body of the faithful;* with duties which none but spiritual persons can discharge—privileges which none but spiritual persons can appreciate—and promises which none but spiritual persons can obtain. The spirituality of its members forms part at least of the essence of the church.

Proved.

27. If, with these explanations before us, we traverse "the holy place" of the Gospel, as Olshausen calls it (John xiv.–xvii.), we shall see at once how these truths pervade this discourse, explain its meaning, and add to its impressiveness.

Christians spiritual in privilege.

In describing His disciples, He speaks of their privileges, their character, and their duties, and all are spiritual. Once they knew not God, but by believing on Christ they learned to know Him, and to come to Him (xiv. 7). Faith brings them into closest communion with their Lord. Henceforth He is in them. If he is the Vine, they are the branches. If he is the Head, they form His body. He goes to prepare a place for them, that He may receive them to Himself Given by the Father to the Son, they are preserved by Almighty grace, and none shall pluck them out of the Father's hand. Hated of the world, they are loved of God, and at last they shall behold and share His glory.

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* See the note on page 205–6, and Appendix, Note II.

Spiritual in character and in duties.

As their privileges are spiritual, so is their character; so also are their duties. They have believed. They are men of prayer; and whatsoever they ask the Father in Christ's name (in dependence, that is, upon His merits, and for the interest of His Church), they are to receive. They are not servants, but friends, for their knowledge is founded on holy intimacy, and their activity is a willing obedience. They keep His sayings. They bear much fruit. They are in the world as Christ was in the world, blessing it, yet not identified with it, and as He sanctified Himself for their salvation, so are they sanctified by His truth. Among themselves they have but one law—old, yet new; for it grows out of new relations, was illustrated in Christ by a new example, gathers strength from new motives, and is the sum of the holiness of the new man—to love one another even as Christ hath loved them: this law being the evidence of their discipleship, and the decisive proof of the divinity of His mission.

The church not a nation or family caste, or secret society, but something combining the advantages of all.

28. The Church, then, is the noblest form of social life. It is the perfection of union. It is not a *nation*, but something more extensive, for it may include all nations. It is, however, more select, for it takes none on the mere ground of national right. It is not a *family*, but something more expansive, for it is to comprehend all the families of the earth. It is yet equally tender in its bonds of union. It is not a *caste*, for it despises none and rejects none. Yet, like the caste, it preserves, amid human depravity and change, a sacred order, not of minis-

ters; but of saints, *all* kings and priests unto God. It is not a *secret society*, for it makes no reserve of its doctrines or practices from the world; yet each of its members find, in the secret communings of his soul with God, the sources of a hidden life. Without the defects, therefore, of the nation, the family, the caste, or the secret society, it combines the advantages of them all. Its members are brethren; they form a holy nation, a peculiar people—a band whose life, and principles, and motives, and strength, are all concealed and hidden with Christ in God.

Particular churches have the same privilege and character.

29. Such is the idea of the Church of Christ, as He Himself developed it. Where his Gospel was preached among the nations, *churches* were formed; little sections, that is, of this universal Church, were gathered together under the same laws, and for the same beneficent purposes.* They are therefore all described in similar terms. In Rome a church was formed, and its members were "beloved of God, whose faith was spoken of throughout the whole world." So in Corinth, they were "the sanctified in Christ Jesus." In Galatia, they were "the children of the promise." In Ephesus, they were "the saints, the faithful in Christ Jesus." In Philippi, they had "fellowship in the Gospel," and "the good work was begun in them." In Colosse, they were "saints who had been delivered from the kingdom of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son." In Thessalonica, they were those to whom "the Gospel had come; not in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance." And those whom the Apostle James addressed, were those whom God had "begotten by the word of truth, that they might be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures."

All these expressions, it is not necessary to show, support the conclusion drawn from the discourses of our Lord,

* See Appendix, Note II.

that the one Church of Christ (with all sections of that church) is composed of spiritual, faithful, *i. e.* believing men, converted by Divine grace, through the power of the truth. They rely on Christ as their salvation, and by virtue of their faith in Him, they bring forth appropriate fruit—a life of holiness and of love.

The church the temple of God.

30. It is in perfect accordance with this view of the church that it is represented in Scripture as the temple of the Holy Ghost. Under the *Law* the temple was at Jerusalem. There only, after the tabernacle was taken down, did God dwell and manifest His presence. In the days of our *Lord* He was Himself the temple; not, it will be observed, the synagogue, a place of assembly for worshipers, nor even the sacred precinct in which the temple was reared (τό ίερόν). but "the habitation itself (ναὸς), where His honor dwelleth." *Now*, however, the *Church* of *Christ* (not a literal building, not the body of our Lord, but the Church of Christ,) the great body of the faithful, forms the dwelling of the Spirit, and individual Christians are the living stones. "Ye," says the apostle, "are built together into a holy temple to the Lord." (Eph. ii. 21.)

Peculiarities of this temple.

31. This temple is without an altar, without sacrifices, and without a sacrificing priest on earth. Its true altar is the cross; its sacrifice the one offering of our Lord; its priest, He who has passed into the heavens." Or, if the worshipers be regarded as offerers, the altar is their hearts; the sacrifice is faith, and love, and praise; and the priest is our Advocate on high. Us and our services He presents, with other merit than our own, unceasingly to God. (Rom. xii. 1; xv. 16.)

Deep significance of John xiv.—xvii.

32. We have but glanced at the truths of these chapters in John. They embrace, it will be observed, the whole work of Christ; that work which has its foundation in Himself, and is to be con-

summated in the complete communion of His people with Him—beginning in a kindred spirit, and in kindred labors on earth, and ending in kindred blessedness in heaven.

SECT. 3.—THE DENIAL OF PETER—THE TRIAL AND CRUCIFIXION OF CHRIST.

Christ's warning.

33. And now the life of our Lord is drawing to its close. He and His disciples have partaken of the last supper. Judas was already at work for the betrayal of his Master; and our Lord, foreseeing His danger, had forewarned them of its approach. "All of you," said He, "shall be offended because of Me this night." (Mark. xiv. 27–31.) Peter, with his wonted boldness, denies our Lord's assertion: "though all should be offended, yet will I never be offended." Christ repeated the warning, and gave it in a personal form. "Before cock-crowing," said He, "thou wilt deny me thrice." But he spake only the more vehemently: "If I should die with Thee, I will not deny Thee." So also said they all.

Peter's self-confidence. In some respects natural.

34. Nor was this self-confidence unnatural. The disciples had just listened to the parting words of our Saviour, and had been melted into tears at the announcement of His approaching departure. As they walked through the quiet streets of the city to the garden of Gethsemane, all Jerusalem seemed wrapt in repose. Within the week Christ had entered the temple amidst the hosannas of the multitudes; hypocritical professions of attachment seemed more easy at that hour than offence or denial.

35. As soon as the disciples reached the garden our Lord renewed His warning, and desired them to pray lest they should enter into temptation; while he went beyond them and prayed also. Taking with Him Peter and James and John, the three who had witnessed His transfiguration, He retired into a more secluded part of the garden. Here

He began "to be sorrowful and very heavy." (Matt. xxvi. 37–39.) Anxious to be kept from interruption while He prepared His own mind for the events which were approaching, He said to this chosen band: "Tarry ye here and watch with Me while I go and pray yonder," and then left them. Soon he was overwhelmed with agony. Falling down to the ground, his body streaming with blood, he cried: "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me. Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt." He then rose, and visited these disciples; but they were already asleep. He rouses them, exhorts them to watch, and again retires to pray with yet stronger crying and tears. And again He had to rebuke their slumbers (v. 40–45). How affecting, that the only personal request Christ ever asked of His disciples should have been denied by the boldest and most ardent of them! Peter must long have remembered these scenes.

Our Lord's agony.

The disciples' want of watchfulness.

36. The time for prayer had now passed. The soldiery, with lanterns and torches, are already in the garden; again Jesus calls the sleepers, and tells them of the approach of the betrayer. Before He had completed His warning, Peter found himself surrounded with armed men; the recollection of his Master's prediction flashed across his mind; and the time of trial he supposes to have come—he has now a character to redeem. To show therefore that, though just now asleep, he is prepared for any emergency, he drew his sword, and smote off the ear of the servant of the high-priest. This act sprung no doubt from enthusiastic religious feeling; but from religious feeling guided by passion or pride, and unchecked by a watchful sober frame. Whatever its origin, it was one chief cause of the temptations that afterwards befell him. It awakened his own fears, and probably excited the ill will of the soldiers.

The approach of the soldiery.

Peter's unhallowed zeal is rebuked.

37. Christ rebuked the zeal of His disciple, healed the wounded man, and gave Himself into their hands. "Put up thy sword into its sheath," said the meek Sufferer: "the cup which my Father has given me, shall I not drink it?" Peter now felt that he had done wrong. As this sudden explosion of impetuosity had no principle to sustain it, it was soon succeeded by cowardice. Seeing that Jesus offered no resistance, but suffered Himself to be bound like a common criminal, Peter with the rest forsook him and fled. They who had said: "Though we die with Thee, we will not be offended," were now hiding themselves among the trees of the garden. Having secured their Prisoner, the guard retired from the garden.

His guilty cowardice.

38. The glare of lanterns and torches soon grows dim in the distance. Gethsemane is again as still as when the disciples entered it. Peter gropes from his hiding-place. His alarm is subsiding, and he begins to reflect upon his conduct. His Master is on His way to the hall of the high priest, without, as far as he knows, a single friend. Is it curiosity that prompts him, or is he subdued by the recollection of his own previous vow and his Master's love? From whatever cause, he turns his steps towards Jerusalem, and slowly follows the crowd that is bearing his Lord into the presence of the Sanhedrim. His motives, however, are not the purest. His decision is half-hearted and incomplete. It is therefore only afar off he follows; and on gaining admission into the hall, he takes his place among the soldiers and servants, waiting at his leisure to see the end. The association is suspicious, and betrays a state of feeling ill suited to contend with the difficulties that are soon to surround him.

39. The trial of the Son of God had already begun. He was asked concerning His disciples and doctrine; He was accused of threatening to destroy the temple, but the evidence proved con-

The trial before the Sanhedrim has begun.

tradictory. Having failed to elicit a confession, and to establish their charge, the high priest solemnly adjured Him, and asked pointedly: "Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" And Jesus said, "I am. And hereafter ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Then the high priest rent his clothes and said, what need we any further witnesses? Ye have heard His blasphemy, what think ye?" (Mark xiv. 61–64.) And they condemned Him to be guilty of death. He was condemned, it will be observed, because He made Himself equal with God.

Christ is condemned.

40. He was now mocked and spit upon. The men who held Him blindfolded Him, struck Him on the face, and in ridicule of his claims to supernatural knowledge, cried out: "Prophesy unto us, thou Christ, who is he that smote thee." (Matt. xxvi. 68.)

Is mocked.

41. And was there none present to shield the Lamb of God from this insult and pain? Yes, there sat one of His chosen apostles tamely beholding the whole of this outrage. A few hours before he had professed his readiness to lay down his life for His sake; but now he dare not, or will not interpose.

Peter's neutrality.

42. In this condition a more decisive trial awaits him. As the light of the fire shone upon his troubled countenance, and before the worst of these outrages had begun, a little maid coming up said, apparently without much intention: "Thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth." The word so fitly spoken roused his conscience and fears. He felt immediately the inconsistency of his position. He was looking on as an unconcerned spectator; he had been silent when questions affecting his Redeemer's character had been discussed—questions which none was so qualified to answer as himself. To confess himself a disciple would be to plead guilty to ingratitude, and would probably have ex-

posed himself to personal danger. And yet he was not prepared to deny his Lord; he takes shelter, therefore, in an equivocal answer, which was meant to be denial, but which seemed less awful than the open avowed apostacy of which he was ultimately guilty: "I know not," said he, "what thou sayest."

His equivocation.

43. Fearing lest the charge should be repeated, he retired to the porch. The very change, however, led to farther inquiry; another servant met him with the same taunt: "This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth." He had now gone too far to recede. To acknowledge the fact would convict him both of ingratitude and of falsehood; for every one understood his former answer as a positive denial. A simple affirmation, moreover, is not enough; he therefore declares with an oath, "I know not the man."

His denial.

44. Again he enters the hall, and is once more in the immediate presence of Christ. The tormenting accusation is again repeated, not by a maid only, but by the whole company of the soldiers. One exclaims, as the light of the fire falls upon Peter's face, "Did I not see thee with Him in the garden?" and another, shrewdly noting his replies, adds, "Surely thou art a Galilean; for thy speech betrayeth thee." Surrounded on all sides by the evidence of his guilt, agitated with fear and remorse, every unholy passion bursting forth with ungovernable power, he began to curse and to swear, saying, "I know not the man." And immediately the cock crew.

His denial with oaths.

45. During this whole scene the trial and mockery of Christ had continued. He, however, was marking the successive steps of the apostacy of His servant, and was more deeply wounded by what He saw than by the treatment of the priests who condemned, or of the crowds who reviled Him. One look of mingled sorrow and love broke the heart of the faithless disciple, softened the hard brow, and sent

him out weeping bitterly. It is not easy to tell which is the more instructive here—the fall of the apostle, or the tenderness of his Lord,

Christ is brought before Pilate, who finds no fault in Him.

46. But we proceed with the main thread of the story. Caiaphas and the Sanhedrim had already condemned our Lord. In the dependent condition of the Jewish nation, however, they had no power to visit His alleged crime of blasphemy with the punishment which, under their own law, it deserved; they therefore took Him to the Roman governor. Pilate questioned Him, and affirmed that he found no fault in Him. But hearing that He had been in Galilee, under Herod's jurisdiction, and that Herod was then in Jerusalem, he sent Him to that king—an act of courtesy against Christ, which healed old feuds and made the two governors friends.

Sends Him to Herod.

47. Herod set Him at naught, and mocked Him; in ridicule arrayed Him in (λαμπρὰν) the white royal robe of the Hebrews, and sent Him back to Pilate. (Luke xxiii. 11.) Again Pilate expressed his conviction that Christ was innocent, and appealed to the people, offering to release Him, or to chastise Him and let Him go. But the people and the chief priests cried, "Away with Him; not this Man, but Barabbas;" till at length Pilate, "fearing a tumult," complied with their request; and, having scourged Him, "delivered Jesus to their power." (Luke xxiii. 25.) The crown of thorns and the imperial purple robe (κοκκίνην χλαμύδα ἱμάτιον πορφυροῦν) were now put upon Him. Again He is spit upon and smitten; and the soldiery, mocking Him, bowed their knees and worshiped, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews."

Pilate again appeals to the people.

Christ is again mocked.

48. While Christ was thus clothed in purple and crowned with thorns, Pilate a third time appealed to the people. "Behold, I bring Him forth to you," said he, "that ye

may know that I find no fault in Him. Behold the Man. But when the chief priest and the officers saw Him, they cried out, Crucify Him, crucify Him." Wearied out with their importunity, and under the significant threat that if he let Him go, he was not Cæsar's friend, Pilate yielded, and delivered Jesus unto them to be crucified. (John xix. 4–16.)

After a third appeal, is handed over to be crucified.

49. The whole of the previous night had been spent in such toils and anguish as must have exhausted His strength. Our Lord had thrice traversed the greater part of Jerusalem, and was therefore little qualified, physically at least, for the suffering that awaited Him. In carrying His cross to the place where He was to be crucified, He sunk under it. Another was pressed into this service, and at length they reach the place of execution.

Christ sinks under his cross.

Here they stripped Him; nailed Him to the wood; strong iron pins being driven through the nerves and sinews of the hands and feet. As these tortures began, some friendly hand, probably, offered Him a draught of the stupefying drink which criminals were wont to take on such occasions, a mixture of wine and bitter herbs ("vinegar and gall," "wine and myrrh"); but when He had tasted, He would not drink. (Matt. xxvii. 34.) In the fullest consciousness our Lord entered upon the last hours of His life.

Is nailed to the cross.

At nine in the morning He was nailed to the cross; He was then lifted up, a thief on either hand; and there He hung till three, mocked by the priests, cruelly tortured by offers of drink to quench His thirst, (Luke xxiii. 36,) railed at by one, at least, of the malefactors who suffered with Him, and deserted of God. At length, "between the evenings," at the time of the offering of the Paschal lamb, Christ our passover was sacrificed for us. He died literally of a broken heart; His heart bursting asunder from the intensity of His responsibility and suffering. "It is finished," were His last words; "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit;" and, having said this, He gave up the ghost. (Luke xxiii. 46; John xix. 30.)*

His death.

51. Amid these sufferings, it was not of Himself that our Lord was thinking. As He passed early in the morning along the streets of the city, and beheld the crowds of women who followed and bewailed Him, He turned to them and said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me; but weep for yourselves and for your children." (Luke xxiii. 28.) As they nailed Him to the cross, He remembered the fierce invocation upon themselves of His blood; and He therefore prayed: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." As the weary hours wore on, one of the malefactors who were crucified with Him, after owning the justice of his own punishment, and vindicating the innocence of Christ, said unto Jesus: "Lord, remember me, when thou comest into thy kingdom;" thus acknowledging His sovereignty and mercy. And Jesus said, "Verily I say unto thee, this day shalt thou be with me in Paradise;" asserting, in a practical form, the qualities which the penitent thief had acknowledged and owned.

Christ's last words addressed to other sufferers, or uttered on their behalf.

As life ebbed away, another scene, no less touching, was witnessed. There were standing by the cross His mother, His mother's sister, Mary, the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. "When, therefore, Jesus saw His mother and the disciple standing by, whom He loved, (so John ever prefers to describe himself,) He saith unto His mother,

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* Dr. Stroud has shown, in an essay on the physical causes of the death of Christ, that He exhibited all the symptoms of the somewhat uncommon disease here named, and that nothing less could account for them.

"Woman, behold thy Son;" and then saith He to the disciple, "Behold thy mother;" and from that hour that disciple took her to his own home. (John xix. 25–27.)

Compassionate even to the close.

Even, therefore, at Calvary, Christ thought of the weeping crowds that followed Him—of the guilt of the men who murdered Him—of the danger of the thieves who were crucified with Him—and of His widowed and disconsolate mother, whom He was leaving behind. If His life was noble and beneficent, His death was divine.

Characteristics of the different records of His last words.

52. How characteristic and instructive, even in these scenes, are our Lord's last words, as recorded by the different evangelists! In Matthew and Mark we have the cry of conscious desertion: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" the cry of the smitten Lamb. In Luke it is the cry of a Son, still at the close dependent upon God as a Father, and sure of support and acceptance: "Into thy hands I commend my spirit." In John it is the cry of one divinely conscious of himself, securing with His own hands the completion of His work: "It is finished!"

SECT. 4. CHRIST CRUCIFIED AFRESH—OR, THE FEELINGS THAT ACTUATED HIS MURDERERS COMMON TO EVERY AGE.

Christ's death a revelation of human nature.

53. The fact of the crucifixion of Christ stands as the centre of the Gospel. All the doctrines of Christianity cluster around it, and become distinct in the light it sheds upon them. It harmonizes and explains the justice and mercy of God, and is the key of all the institutes and mysteries of the ancient law. As a revelation of human nature and of man, it is no less instructive.

The holiness of Christ's life.

54. During His life, Christ had been known only as the benefactor of our race. He was ever ready to give up His own comforts at the slightest wish

of those round Him. His miraculous power, never exerted on His own behalf, was at the service of the humblest petitioner. His benevolence was unwearying; His sympathy with all that was lovely and harmless in man was perfect; and the purity of His life was complete. He rebuked sin indeed, but He always pitied the sinner. He claimed to be the Messiah of prophecy, but this claim interfered with no temporal throne. For such a being to die a death of violence seems an outrage on some of our most cherished conceptions, both of the government of God and of the better nature of man.

The malignancy of the passions that conspired against Him lead us to hope that the crucifixion is never to be repeated.

As this death was designed to atone for all guilt, nearly all guilt combined to accomplish it. It gathered tribute from every bad passion. It was cowardice that led the disciples of our Lord to desert Him; it was covetousness that betrayed Him; it was perjury that bore false witness against Him; it was envy that delivered Him up. Cruelty scourged and crowned Him with thorns. Popular fickleness chose Barabbas, and rejected Him; while, in the soldiers, coarse brutality buffeted and mocked Him. In contemplating these scenes, our first reflection is: "never surely is man to repeat this wickedness. May we not hope that it will remain a crime without a parallel; a sad, yet solitary monument, of human guilt."

And yet the contrary is the fact.

55. And yet, against this hope, it must be remembered, that the thing which has been is the thing also that shall be." Mankind repeat themselves from age to age; each generation is the echo of its predecessors. Throughout all time, our besetting sins remain unchanged; they have ever been worldliness and unbelief. With all the records that have come down to us, telling how our fathers fought and fell, we begin the divine life like children, and are vanquished by temptations which were old in the days of Abraham or of Paul. Add

to the fact of this tendency, that in the early church were some who, after Christ had suffered, "crucified him *afresh*, and put Him to an open shame;" and it becomes plain that this fearful catastrophe of the crucifixion may be repeated. Men are still capable of disowning and rejecting Christ. They have the power, and too often the disposition, to buffet and scourge Him—to crown and crucify Him. Nor was there a single act with which either the disciples, or the judges of our Lord, or the Jews generally, were chargeable, which may not be repeated, and is not repeated, even in our own day.

Christ may be crucified afresh,

56. Mark, for example, the conduct and bearing of the favored disciples of our Lord amid those scenes. Peter, as we have seen, deserted and denied Him. Judas, another of His disciples, depraved by paltry hope of gain, or, at the very best, by impatient unbelief, sold Him. "What will ye give me," said he to the Pharisees, "and I will deliver Him unto you?" and, for thirty pieces of silver, he betrayed to death one who had been his best friend, and whose innocence he himself attested. Among the bitterest of the ingredients of the cup which He had to drink was this fickleness and desertion. Two of their number at least, Peter and John, had heard their master accused, and had uttered no word of defence; they had quietly looked on while He was smitten and mocked, and attempted neither to succor nor to console Him. They might have vindicated His character, even if they could not have obtained His release. One of them, the boldest, had denied, in the presence of the multitude, that he ever knew Him; a statement which those who heard it knew to be false. If this was the character of the disciple, they might have reasoned, what can the character of the Master be? Whence comes the teaching that produces such results? This conduct had doubt-

By some who copy the conduct of the disciples.

less wounded the Lamb of God more deeply than the treatment of His foes; and this wounding He received in the house of His friends!

Alas! for us, Peter and Judas still live; and it may be safely affirmed, that Christ is seldom treated in His truth or in His followers with insult and wrong, but there are professed disciples who contribute to this treatment, who desert Him in the presence of His enemies, or who are ready to give him up into their hands.

By others who copy the conduct of the judges of Christ.

57. But let us look again at this scene, and at the conduct of the judges of Christ. Among the most instructive parts of the history is the record of the wavering, timorous Pilate. As Roman governor, he no doubt held in his hands the power of life and death. He believed Christ to be guiltless, and was willing to save Him. He appeared anxious to do right, so long as His virtue cost him nothing; and yet, in the end, preferred ease and influence to conscience.

Pilate.

And is not Pilate living still? Are there not now many who would be models of piety, if their piety did not disturb their tenure of wealth and station; who would save the Son of God from degradation, if they were not apprehensive that in the task they might degrade themselves; who "find no fault in Him," and would therefore "let Him go;" and yet, if the crowd threaten a tumult, or the powerful hint that such conduct bespeaks a man no friend of Cæsar's, hand over the Lord to His foes, and consign Him and His cause even to the cross?

The Sanhedrim.

Not very different was the course taken by the chief rulers. "Among the chief rulers," says John, "*many* believed Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." (John xii. 42.) They were members of the Sanhedrim, and they had a voice in its deliberations; they were present, probably, when our Lord was condemned, and they either joined in the cry, "He is guilty of death," or they silently acquiesced in it; for the sentence seems to have been passed without a dissentient voice.

It cannot be affirmed that the rulers were peculiar in yielding to this fear of men. False shame operated in all ranks, as we may learn from the case of the parents of the man who was born blind; but it is said to have operated chiefly among the higher classes—an instructive fact. (John v. 14.) How many are there now with whom the verdict of men outweighs every other consideration; and who are ever ready to sacrifice their convictions to their position? In heathen countries this influence deters the true disciple from Christian profession itself; and in countries avowedly Christian it acts yet more insidiously, that it is not open disavowal of Christ at which it aims, but secret neglect. The world seldom asks us formally to disown the Gospel, but only to forget it. Act as if principles were false and error true; you may then leave it to others to repudiate the principles you hold, and to defend the error upon which you act. The world may thus gain all it seeks; and men fall into the sin of the chief rulers, and do their part to crucify the Son of God afresh, without giving up one outward badge of Christian discipleship.

Those who deny the Divinity of our Lord.

There is one more fact connected with the decision of the judges, no less striking. Christ was condemned on the charge of blasphemy. The evidence which was first adduced against Him having broken down, He was then asked the question: "Art thou the Son of God?" and He replied in the appropriate idiom of the language He spoke, "Thou hast said;" *i. e.* "I am." Then said the judges: "Ye have heard his blasphemy, what think ye?" and they answered, "He is guilty of death." (Matt. xxvi. 63.) Nor did He, when brought before Pilate, deny the character which He thus claimed; and on the charge of "making Himself equal with God," to use the language of the other Evangelist, His judges condemned Him. Is it not a startling fact, that there are those in our own time who say that Christ was not the Son of God in any true sense; who maintain that it is blasphemy to ascribe this title to Him in any other sense than as it belongs to all revealers and interpreters of the Divine will?

If Christ were not the Son of God, He deceived the people. But if He was the Son of God, then those who would withhold that title, who affirm that either He never used it with a deep full meaning, or that if He did so use it, He used it wrongfully, really express their readiness to join in the decision of the Sanhedrim, "We have heard His blasphemy; He is guilty of death." To deny His sonship is to concur in the sentence; for it is to charge Him either with blasphemy or with deception. And, in either case, if guilty, He was justly condemned.

By those who copy the conduct of the people.

57. But let us mark the conduct, not of the rulers only, but of the Jews themselves, as they gathered around the cross. Christ was evidently a favorite with them. His kindly bearing, His unwearied beneficence, perhaps the mystery that lent dignity to his life, seem to have caught and pleased the popular mind. More than once it is said that the great obstacle to the success of the plans of the Pharisees was, that "they feared the people." It is certain, moreover, that with such a governor as Pilate, any outburst of popular feeling would have delayed, even if it had not prevented, the crucifixion. And yet how impressive is their silence. The poor sufferer carries His cross till He faints under it. The crowd follow, and watch Him till the person of our Lord is nailed to it. The cross is lifted up in the

air, and shook down into its socket among the holes of Calvary. Thousands, probably, of that crowd had witnessed His miracles, and very many of them had shared in the gifts of His bounty. Not a week before they had thronged His steps as he entered their city, and had swelled the cry —"Hosanna!. Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord!" but now, though looking with eager gaze, they utter no sounds but of taunting curiosity, or of gross ignorance. "Let us see if Elias will come and save Him." To the very end, amid all the horrors of the actual sufferings of our Lord, they preserved the spirit they had manifested at the beginning, when they fearlessly invoked His blood upon themselves and upon their children.

Their guilty acquiescence in the murder.

And are there not such among the people still? They honor Christ so long as He confers easy blessings; express boundless admiration of His Gospel; speak glowingly of the dignified simplicity of His character, of the beauty of His precepts; and can contrast with these qualities the conduct of some who profess, and, alas! only profess, to be his disciples. But let him contradict their prejudices, or seek to enforce practical holiness, and they blindly follow their guilty guides, disown the truths they once admired, and persecute the cause they seemed to love!

'But surely,' it will be said, 'human nature has not sunk to the level of Jewish degradation. Men no longer prefer the thief and the murderer to the noble and virtuous Nazarene.' Not sunk to this depth of degradation! Who, then, are the darling idols of worldly applause? Whom do men follow, and with whom do they most associate? Is the heroic character, or the patient and teachable, the favorite with the people? Put on one side the Barabbases of history, the men who have gained influence and wealth (by whatever means), and

In their cry for Barabbas.

who have those gifts to distribute; and, on the other, the self-denial, the meekness, and the suffering of the cross. Bid men take their sides; and how many will linger with Christ, "deeming His reproach greater riches than the treasures of Egypt?" What the Jews did is done still. Multitudes act in accordance with their decision; and if they were compelled to speak they would join the cry, "If we must choose—not this man, but Barabbas."

In their mockery of Christ.

'But, at least,' it will be said, 'even if this were their cry, it would be consistent and open. Men do not add insult to injury. None now put on Him the scarlet robe, or the crown of thorns. None bow the knee in derision of His claims.' It may be hoped not. And yet how many of us have confessed guilt which we did not feel! How often have we joined in public prayer while our hearts were unconscious of the submission which our knees expressed! For how many mercies have we presented thanksgivings, though receiving them as our right, and wasting them on our lusts! And does this conduct differ from the sin of the soldiers, who called Him king, and despised the royalty they ascribed; or can we hope that the mocking reverence which shocks so much when offered to Him when He was poor, will appear less guilty when offered to Him now that He is exalted!

All classes guilty.

58. If we look, then, beneath the outward acts of human conduct to the hidden principles from which they spring, it will be found that the guilt of crucifying the Lord is oft repeated—by avowed disciples, who desert and deny, and would even sell Him, and with Him every principle of conscience; by men of rank and wealth, who would aid His cause, but they fear a tumult, or think that to identify themselves too closely with Christ might compromise them with the world; by those who believe but do not confess; who admit Him to have been a good man, but deem it blasphemy to regard Him as

more; by the people, whose fickle admiration ends when they feel the pressure of the morality of His Gospel, and the self-denying character of the Christian life; and by those who in every age have preferred the specious to the real, or who have mocked with empty lip-service that Divine King who is satisfied with nothing less than the homage of the heart!

The crucifixion a revelation of God as well as of Man.

59. But this event of the crucifixion throws light upon other facts. It is the revelation of Man. It shows what he has done and what he is. It is also the revelation of God. It sets forth his character in forms and colors more distinct than are to be seen in creation. And to the study of this aspect of the cross we now proceed.

SECT. 5.—CHRIST THE PROPITIATION.

All guilty. Justification by rignt impossible.

60. Man is created under law. That law is not an arbitrary institution; it is the embodiment of principles necessary to the happiness of intelligent beings. It has its origin not in the sovereignty of God, but in his character. Love to himself and to our neighbor is the sum of its requirements; requirements which it is impossible to conceive of otherwise than as extended throughout the moral universe of God.

Sin is the transgression of law, and all men are sinners. "The whole world lieth in wickedness." "All have gone astray." "There is not a just man upon earth that sinneth not." "If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." (1 John v. 19; Ps. xiv. 3; Ecc. vii. 20; 1 John i. 8.) No language can be more clear or decisive; and the purpose for which it is used is declared to be, "that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God." (Rom. iii. 19.) Justification by right therefore, that is, freedom from guilt and punishment on the ground of innocence, is impossible.

The simple statement of our true condition leads by one step to this result.

May man be justified for reasons in himself—as penitence, reformation?

61. But after a man has been pronounced guilty by law, it is possible to arrest the consequences of his guilt; he may be *forgiven*. Reasons may be found *in himself*, or in another, to justify the interference on his behalf of the supreme power. Mercy may be extended to him as the reward of previous good conduct; as a consequence of his penitence, or of his promise of amendment; or as an answer to his humble and earnest appeals to the government. In cases where the crime is trivial, or the propriety of the law is doubted, or the evidence is unsatisfactory, such pleas are sometimes admitted; the penalty due to transgression is not inflicted, and the man who is himself guilty, is nevertheless treated as innocent. May we not expect pardon, if it is asked on similar grounds, at the hands of our Creator?

How answered by many.

62. A thousand voices give a ready and affirmative reply. "My son acknowledges his fault, and I forgive him. Am I better than the great Father of all! Are not the yearnings of my heart in such a case a faint image of the yearnings of His? His tender mercies are over all His works; and He is ever ready to forgive."

The true answer.

How by analogy, and the nature of the case.

63. He is: our forgiveness is the result of His mercy; and yet neither penitence nor mercy is properly the ground of forgiveness. Keeping in view the case of a pardoned criminal, it must be remembered (in contrast with it) that our sins against God are not trivial. They are capital; subversive of all authority, and in violation of all law. Our guilt is not questioned. We have done evil from our youth up, and are justly chargeable with ten thousand transgressions. The law we have broken is righteous and beneficent, eternal and immutable. The penalties it

inflicts are involved in a great degree in transgression itself; punishment being but the unavoidable perpetuation of sin, and requiring for the removal or prevention of it miraculous interposition. God, moreover, is not only parent of His creatures, He is judge, and has to discharge official functions; and these cannot be neglected without injury to His character and the very foundations of His government.

Experience, and human conviction.

In perfect accordance with these views are the convictions of human nature as expressed in the religious rites of all nations. Those rites imply a state not of innocence, but of guilt. They include sacrifice and suffering as grounds of forgiveness; and clearly teach that the heart of man, when not misled by a false philosophy, has an instinctive consciousness that something else is required for pardon besides penitence. History confirms these impressions by presenting a thousand examples, in which it is evident that guilt is not cancelled by sorrow, however profound, or by promises of amendment, however sincere.

How answered in Scripture.

Repentance needed.

64. But let us turn to the Bible. Having broken the law, whence comes, according to its teaching, our hope of forgiveness—from ourselves or from another? Is pardon suspended there on man's virtues and penitence, or on something else? And again a thousand voices will reply: repentance and sincerity are constantly spoken of as the pre-requisites of pardon. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him, and unto our God, for He will abundantly pardon." "If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, thou wilt not despise." (Is. lv. 7; 1 John i. 9;

Ps. li. 17.) And, it will be added, the very precepts of our Lord we have already considered point to the same results. No true penitent is ever condemned.

These passages we joyfully admit. They form an important part of the gospel; but only a part. To regard them as teaching that repentance is alone necessary, or that it is the ground of forgiveness, is a fearful abuse, and subversive both of repentance and of holiness. For if this view be sound, we have several consequences. It then follows that the law is changed, both its denunciations and precepts. It tells us that "death" is the "wages," *i. e.*, the just desert "of sin;" but to maintain that repented sin, being cancelled, has no such desert, is clearly to limit and even to contradict this principle. To those under law it affirms that "he that doeth these things shall live by them;" but now others besides may live; not only those who do them, but those also who repent of their misdoings.

But not the meritorious cause.

If so, what then?

Does it not follow also, if this reasoning be admitted, that God himself is changed? He can clearly cherish no abhorrence of sin as sin, but only of sin as unrepented. The innocent and the penitent-guilty are alike in His sight. Sin wept over is annihilated and forgotten.

Nor can it be deemed a refinement of reasoning to maintain, that if repentance is a meritorious ground of pardon, repentance itself is impossible. True repentance is hatred of sin as such; but on this reasoning sin as such is not hateful, but only the sin which is not the subject of penitence. But if sin is not of itself wrong, but only sin unrepented of, it follows that men can repent only of their impenitence. But impenitence itself is not wrong if cherished in relation to what is not wrong. So that both sin and penitence are destroyed. Sin has no existence without impenitence; and impenitence can involve no guilt, nor penitence have existence, where there is no sin.

To maintain therefore, as is the tendency of our nature, that repentance cancels sin by some mysterious influence of its own, is to subvert the very foundation of morals. Such a view overturns the first principles of holiness. If the law is just, it is just that it should be enforced. To confess that it is just does not destroy its justness, and to acknowledge that we deserve to die cannot alter our deserts. "Therefore by the deeds of the law can no flesh living be justified; for by the law is the knowledge of sin."

May it not be added that if repentance were the ground of forgiveness, our state would be but little alleviated by the knowledge of such a truth. Repentance is the hatred of sin, and the practice of holiness. Even if these only be the terms on which salvation is offered to our race, are we prepared to fulfill them? And if we need even for repentance Divine help, whence, and on what grounds, is that help to be obtained?

Scripture teaching on the death of Christ.

65. The conclusions to which reason and law thus lead are confirmed by the express teachings of Scripture. That repentance is necessary to salvation we have seen. That it is not the only thing necessary, nor in any sense the meritorious ground of it, are conclusions drawn from the fact that salvation is always ascribed in Scripture to something else; and from the further fact that nothing man does can *in any degree* deserve pardon. "Without shedding of blood there is no remission." "If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins." "The Son of Man came to give His life a ransom for many." (Heb. ix. 22; John viii. 24; Mark x. 45.) "This is my blood shed for many for the remission of sins." "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "Christ

hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." "And in Him we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of our sins, according to the riches of his grace." (Matt. xxvi. 28; John iii. 16; Gal. iii. 13; Eph. i. 7; Col. i. 14.) Whatever the full meaning of these statements is, they imply that more than penitence is required for salvation, and that it is not to penitence as a ground or meritorious cause that our salvation is ascribed.

On salvation by grace.

Further, it must be noticed, that the insufficiency of all personal acts to deserve pardon is stated in Scripture to be absolute. It is an insufficiency in *kind*, not in degree. The teaching of the Bible is not that with Christ they will together secure the blessing, as if all contributed to the result; but that the effective influence belongs to Christ alone; and that our acts, whether of activity or of emotion, are demanded for other purposes. This is the doctrine of the Epistle to the Romans; in which it is repeatedly affirmed, that our salvation is the result of a reception of Christ, or of faith in Him, independently of works, whether of simple obedience, or of penitential reformation. "We are justified by faith without the deeds of law." "It is of faith that it might be of grace." "*Christ* is made unto us redemption; and in *Him* we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of our sins." "We are justified freely by His grace, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus." "He hath made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God (righteous in the sight of God) in Him." (Rom. iii. 28; Rom. iv. 16; 1 Cor. i. 30; Eph. i. 7; Rom. iii. 24; 2 Cor. v. 21.) And that nothing in man can efficiently contribute to the result, is made plain by the general conclusion reiterated elsewhere—one purpose indeed of the whole arrangement.

"He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." (1 Cor. i. 31; 2 Cor. x. 17.)

But the propitiation of Christ. Penitence and faith the conditions on which it becomes available.

66. Pardon, therefore, it seems, is the result of Christ's death—and of Christ's death alone. Repentance, and other personal acts, have no *power* to obtain it: they are but the conditions or qualifications, on which His death is made available for sinners.

The death of Christ the ground of our justification. How?

67. But *how*, it may now be asked, is the death of Christ the *ground* of our justification? All the reasons that weigh with God in this arrangement it is impossible for us to know; but such as are revealed may be examined, and they cannot fail to be examined as themes of the deepest interest.

Perfections of God, and principles of his government.

From what has been already said, it is clear that God's government is a government according to law; He has himself both official functions and a personal character; sin is a grave and fearful offence against Him. Therefore, however compassionate God may be towards the sinner, the arbitrary exercise of prerogative in remitting sin is impossible, because inconsistent with holiness. And while these are principles in relation to this question which spring, so to speak, out of the very nature of the Divine government, there are facts no less important, resting on experience. Men are sinners; and, as such, are exposed to the punishment connected with disobedience. The infliction of punishment, however, is, in a great degree, suspended. In the mean time an extraordinary measure has been introduced into the world by God himself. This measure provides a valid ground for the bestowment of pardon; and is nothing less than the sacrifice and death of His Son. The following passages place these facts in the clearest light. "The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin." "God sent forth his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin." "He who knew no sin was made sin for us." "Sacrifice and offering" (the ritual appointments of the law) "thou wouldest not; but a body hast thou prepared me. Lo! I come to do thy will, O God." (1 John i. 7; Rom. viii. 3; 2 Cor. v. 21; Heb. x.) Here a simple-minded believer might pause; and, believing these truths, be saved. The death of the Messiah is recognized in all these passages, and in many others, as the ground or consideration, on account of which pardon is revealed and bestowed on man. God must punish, is the first truth. Through Christ punishment is suspended or remitted, is the second.

The truth explained.

68. But Scripture goes still farther. It not only tells us what constitutes the ground of pardon; it also explains to some extent *how* it is so. It gives undoubted intimations respecting the design, the necessity, and the nature of the appointment; the properties which impart to it its power with God, and with man. It tells us, for example, that the scheme itself originated in the love of the Father, and was, moreover, intended to illustrate His holiness. "God so loved the world, that He sent His Son" to reconcile it to Himself. God hath "set forth His Son a propitiation for sin, to declare, or display His righteousness; that He might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." (Rom. iii. 25.)

His death satisfies justice and reveals mercy.

The influence of this act upon God's government is also revealed. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us;" "He died the just for the unjust;" Christ gave "Himself a ransom for us."

Thus glorifying God and reconciling his personal and his official relations.

That God regarded His death as a sufficient reason why all who believe in Him should be forgiven, is equally plain. Because He laid down His life, the Father gave him power to give eternal life to as many as God had given Him. Through

His dignity and innocence "He bare our sins (not His own) in His own body on the tree;" "He became obedient unto death;" and, therefore, "God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name above every name." (Phil ii. 8.) "If the blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of an heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctify to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God, purge our conscience from dead works?" (Heb. ix. 13)—from the burden and the condemnation of works which end in death.

God and man both look to the cross.

The conclusion, therefore, is, that in Christ and His obedience unto death God beholds an adequate reason for the exercise of mercy. There the rectitude of the Judge and the love of the Father are equally displayed. His people, accepted in the Beloved, have the punishment of their sins cancelled. They are judicially placed in the condition and character of personal virtue. They become objects both of complacency and affection. God looks on Christ, and He sees in Him the ground of forgiveness. They look on Christ, and are justified through faith, which faith is itself an instrument of holiness. Heaven and earth, God and man, are thus alike influenced by the cross.

This scheme witnessed by the prophets.

69. Every part of this scheme, it must be added, "is witnessed by the law and the prophets." Throughout the whole of revelation, God is everywhere presented as the moral Governor of man. For thousands of years he appears teaching the great truth of His own righteous demands, and of man's inability to meet them.

The Bible is a record of God's requirements on the one hand, and of man's incompetency on the other. The connection of sin with punishment is everywhere asserted;

and more than this, the doctrine of the transference of punishment is repeatedly and forcibly revealed. Reason concurs in these lessons. The experience of common life sustains them; and thus all lend their evidence to confirm what becomes to us glad tidings of great joy—a message of wrath blended with a message of love; tidings happily as universal in their announcement and adaptation as is the disease they are intended to heal.

In what terms described.

70. The terms in which the various aspects of this great work are described are all significant. The death of Christ is called a *propitiation*, for it makes it possible for God to receive sinners into favor, and prompts to the exercise of mercy in a way consistent with the claims of justice. It is called an *expiation*, for it covers sin, and provides for the removal of guilt and consequent punishment. It is an *atonement*, both expiating and propitiating, while it brings into friendship those who were once opposed. It is *vicarious* or substitutional, being endured in our stead. And it is *satisfactory*, for it vindicates the broken law, answers all the moral purposes of punishing the trangressors, and is deemed by the Lawgiver himself to be a sufficient reason for pardoning all who believe. Its first fruit is *forgiveness* and *peace*—complacency on God's part, and confidence on ours; its ultimate fruits, *redemption* and *salvation*—that is, actual freedom from sin in its guilt, power, and misery, and in the end eternal life: redemption differing from salvation only in suggesting the price paid for these gifts. In part they are already enjoyed, but in their fullness they are yet to come.

The Divinity of Christ involved in the efficacy of this sacrifice,

71. We must not go farther on this question than Scripture guides us; but it is impossible to overlook the fact, that if the Being who suffered the penalty of human guilt be not He whose justice demanded the sacrifice, our notions of satisfaction

are all confounded; and the atonement not only leaves the attributes of justice and love unreconciled, but it does absolute violence to both.

else no merit in His suffering.

If our Lord were man only, then we have the law of God satisfied, and even honored, by the sufferings of One who Himself owed to that law all the obedience He could give. There could in that case have been no merit in His humiliation; none in His submission; none in His obedience; and (inasmuch as the law of God requires us to give up our lives for the brethren) none in His death. And to all created intelligences will this reasoning apply; to all, in fact, except to that one Being who owes no duty but to Himself. To Christ it does not apply, because He was at once the Great God and our Saviour—the Child and the Everlasting Father—Jehovah-man!

And no revelation of the divine character.

Nor is it easier, if the divinity of our Lord be denied, to reconcile the attributes of God's character. What infinite justice is there in placing the penalty of human transgression upon one totally distinct from the Lawgiver, an inferior and innocent? What infinite love in accepting the endurance of pain, which was, after all, no satisfaction? And if it be maintained that the infinite love was in Christ, and the infinite holiness in Him, then it follows that the merit of our redemption is practically transferred from Jehovah to the man who achieved it; leaving the blessed God Himself to be outdone by His own creature in the manifestation of His noblest perfections, and in the very dispensation intended to display them! Admit the Scriptural scheme, and all is consistent. The love and holiness on the part both of God and of Christ are infinite; yet there is no fear of idolatry, though men "honor the Son even as they honor the Father!"

Practical influence of the cross.

72. This great fact of the life of our Lord, ending in His death, may be variously regarded. On the side towards God it is the instrument of our justification. By His obedience many are made righteous. We are justified by His blood—we are reconciled by His death. On the side towards men it is the instrument of our holiness. With both God and man it is omnipotent, containing every element of power; in *itself*, adapted to stir to its utmost depth all human feeling, and appointed by God as a reason on account of which the influences of His Holy Spirit may be infused into all hearts. "He has received gifts for men," even "the promise of the Holy Ghost." (Ps. lxviii. 18; Acts ii. 33.) His is "a name above every name, that every knee should bow, and every tongue confess, to the glory of God the Father."

But the fact that the death of Christ is adapted to have power with men claims additional illustration.

Its influence over natural feeling.

73. At first sight His obedience unto death may seem to embody neither wisdom nor power. The Jew deemed it not only powerless and inanimate, but a weakness and an offence. The Greek called it foolishness. (1 Cor. i. 23.) In the event of the crucifixion, Christ is no doubt exhibited in His deepest humiliation. As He passed from the hall of judgment to the hill of Calvary, He seemed a common criminal; His brow still marked with the thorns, and His face swollen with the agony of the previous night and the blows of the soldiery. When He reached the spot where they meant to crucify Him, He appeared as one of the poorest and most friendless of men. Amid shouts and taunts He was lifted up. Others are crucified with Him. To the eye of man all are abject, and He most abject of all.

"There are not wanting, however, even amid those indications of weakness, mysterious tokens of a Divine presence, and of the solemn significance of His death. The earth, and the sky, and the temple, fit representations of all created and divine things, are moved at the scene. Angels that excel in strength are watching the sufferer with reverent interest. That victim, seemingly disowned by earth and heaven, and therefore suspended between them, is our Maker. In that meek and lowly form is veiled the incarnate God. Angels that smote a camp, and destroyed the first-born of a nation in a night, have worshiped Him. His very enemies, who put Him to death, and who have often watched Him in His acts and speech, can bring against Him no consistent or intelligible accusation. His judges 'find no fault in Him.' There, amid the scoffs of His murderers, dies the only One of Adam's race that knew no sin. A life of unequalled beneficence is consummated by a death of violence and anguish, itself an expression of the noblest beneficence. Thus viewed, elements of grandeur and tenderness, of loftiest splendor and the lowliest condescension, all blend in that dread sacrifice. Do men look with interest on greatness in misery? It is here: The King of Glory despised and rejected of men! Are they touched with sympathy for distress? How deep must have been His anguish, when even His patient spirit cried out, 'My God, my God! why hast Thou forsaken me?'—and rejoiced when He was able to say, 'It is finished?' Do they need, in order to feel most deeply, to have some connection with the sufferer? They have a suspicion that, somehow or other, the case might have been their own. It is the man Christ Jesus who dies, and dies in the stead of men. Should wisdom attract? Here was the great Teacher Himself, speaking as man never spoke, giving lessons even from the cross! The God-man, of whom Plato had glimpses, is here dying ignominiously, an example of perfect innocence, and enduring the treatment due to consummate wickedness! Are men strongly affected by what they know as affecting others? This sacrifice stirs all worlds—hell is losing its prey—heaven is stooping to behold its King incarnate and dying, that He may recover to His allegiance a lost province of His empire, indulging His mercy and satisfying His justice, whilst His last breath magnifies His law and proclaims His Gospel."* Looking through history, it appears that this scene has influenced the noblest of our race, and has prompted to deeds of unparalleled devotedness. Children have felt its power, without being repelled by the mystery. The mightiest intellects have studied it, without grasping its vastness. Those living by faith in it have become partakers of a Divine nature; the world has become crucified to them, and they to the world. No earthly terrors could appal, no earthly charms could allure them. The very miracles of the life of our Lord wrought upon the bodies of men, seem to be but faint types of the mightier miracles wrought through the Spirit in their souls by this miracle of grace.

If we look more deeply into this power, we shall find that it has elements of even a nobler kind.

Influence over religious emotions.

74. Human life is made up in a large measure of sin and suffering. The first shows us our guilt, and the second our helplessness. Guilt leads us to view God with distrust, and suffering makes it needful that we should have a Friend who can show us how to suffer, and give us, at the same time, an assurance of sympathy and relief. No religious system that fails to provide for these necessities of our condition can have a permanent hold upon the human heart. The

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* Abridged from Dr. Williams's Lecture on "The Cross the Conservative Principle of our Literature." Some of the following thoughts will be found expanded and illustrated with great beauty in the same address.

provision supplied in this respect by the Gospel is identified with the cross.

Confidence.

Conscious of our guilt, and judging God by ourselves, it is hard to believe that He is ready to be "pacified towards us for all our abominations." (Ezek. xvi. 62.) Till this is believed we cannot love Him. It is confidence only that brings man back to God. This is the true principle of our recovery. But what is so adapted to produce this confidence as the death of Christ? He appears as "the way, and the truth, and the life." Herein God "commendeth His love to us, that while we were yet sinners Christ died for the ungodly." (Rom. v. 8.) The reasoning is irresistible: "He that spared not His own Son, but gave Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things." (Rom. viii. 32.)

Assurance of sympathy.

But still, though God is thus shown to be love, He is felt to be infinitely above us. We shrink from telling Him of our cares and weakness. If we knew of one who had experienced human life, and yet had the almighty power of God, in Him we might trust: His personal recollections of our condition would encourage our application and dependence. And is not this want nobly met in our Lord? "We have not a High-Priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." (Heb. iv. 15.) If poor, we may remember that He "had not where to lay His head." If suffering reproach, it is told us that He was deemed "a glutton and a winebibber;" "a friend of publicans and sinners;" "a blasphemer," and "mad." If unjustly treated by men, and apparently deserted by God, we need but to turn to Calvary, and, while gazing there, we cease to think it strange concerning the fiery trial that has befallen us. We are crucified together. He knows our sorrows. "He remembers that we are dust."

And is an example needed? Would even the teaching of our Lord be imperfect if He had not Himself shown us how to suffer? Go again to the cross. When He was reviled He reviled not again; when He suffered He threatened not, but committed Himself unto Him that judgeth righteously." (1 Pet. ii. 23.) Am I forbidden to feel? Is stoic indifference a Christian virtue? "Jesus wept." He was "troubled in spirit." (John xi. 35; xiii. 21.) "Father," said He, "if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." Men murder Him, and He prays for them. His Father deserts Him, and yet He trusts Him. Herein He suffered, "leaving us an example that we should follow His steps." (1 Pet. ii. 21.)

An example of patience.

75. Nor are there wanting other influences. What am I, and what is my condition? is a question that lies at the foundation of all religion. Rightly to know ourselves is the beginning of all knowledge. Contemplate, then, in the light of the cross, the condition of human nature. Ancient and modern philosophies have delighted to flatter our pride. They have traced up our pedigree to God, and they have claimed for us a dignity which would be very welcome, if only it could be maintained. Brahmins, for example, speak of themselves as an incarnation of the Deity; and the Pantheistic tendencies of men, or their pride, tempt them to hold the sentiment even when they have not shaped it into words.

Its influence on our convictions of truth as to ourselves.

It follows from this doctrine that in beings so noble, there can be no deep inherent depravity. A taint of evil on the surface there may be, but that is all, and it is easily removed. Perhaps (it is darkly hinted) their condition is properly chargeable on matter, on provoking circumstances, or even on the blessed God; so that, after all, men may be guiltless of any worse evil than misfortune. But bring this language to the cross. What lessons are taught there? He who hung upon it tasted *death* for every man, because every man had sinned, and so had deserved to die. He is the just one, and for the unjust He suffers. In the agony and passion of this second Head of the race, I read the desert of the first. I am no God, nor part of God, but a condemned sinner. The blood of a divine atonement was needed to purge my sins. Am I told of the native dignity and innocence of man, and of his sympathy with the divine? The divine in all its perfection became incarnate. For that perfection man had no sympathy. Nor was it even welcomed in the world it came to redeem. Veiled at first, the Divine glory gradually shone through the veil more brightly till the world was illumined; but ever as it shone, the hatred in men's hearts burned fiercer, and here, on the cross, they are doing what *they* can to extinguish it forever.

Am I told that the Jews, the murderers of our Lord, were worse than men; and that now, at least, virtue needs but to be seen in order to be worshiped? I look again at the cross. Every tendency of human nature which these murderers exhibited I mark around me still. Men are capable of doing over again that deed of blood. They crucify the Son of God afresh in His followers, His principles, and His kingdom. They put Him even now to an open shame. And is it amid these scenes, and with the history of this teacher before me, that I am to speak of my native worth, and claim equality with God? Thoughts like these, everywhere absurd, are impious here. The cross, the exhibition of man's deserts, itself the expression of man's depravity, is clearly adapted to annihilate all such dreams. In the end it may exalt us to unknown dignities, but its first lesson is of humiliation and guilt. What man deserves, and what man has done, what therefore man *is*, are truths revealed at Calvary in characters which none need misunderstand.

76. What again is religion, and what are its claims? Men's characters are moulded by the object of their worship, and by the truths they hold; those especially that refer to God and holiness. Every religious faith some deem to be alike. There is true piety, they say, in all creeds. Sincerity is its essence. Men will never 'see eye to eye.' Have charity; and receive as brethren, if they be but sincere, the worshipers of Buddha and of Jehovah, of Mahomet and of Christ.

The nature of true religion.

All such equality the cross disclaims. Had Christ been content to blend Sadduceeism, and Pharisaism, and Heathenism into one religion, to sanction all as meaning the same thing, or even to allow them a place in that pure and exclusive system He came to reveal, He would never have suffered. Instead of such blending, however, He denounced all compromises. He assailed every false system, and by the advocates of all He himself was condemned. Truth was not on His lips an eclectic faith, a compound of all human opinions, and, as such, adapted to meet the prejudices of all. Like its Author, it stood out distinctly from every thing earthly, formed no secular alliances, and allowed no rival. Had He been contented to *share* the throne of men's hearts, or to elaim for the religion of the Bible a place among other systems, neither He Himself would have suffered, nor would His apostles have had to contend with the ten thousand opposing influences in Jerusalem, in Athens, and at Rome. Of this peculiarity of the teaching of our Lord, the cross is at once an evidence and a result.

77. But it answers another question. May not God pass by transgression? Is not law the emanation of God's will? He instituted, and may He not abrogate it? He is beneficence and grace. He is the Father of His creatures, and may He not indulge the yearnings of His parental heart, and look with equal eye on all His children; pitying the weak-

And the supremacy and immutability of law.

ness of the sinful; but in the exercise of a mercy which no finite mind can comprehend, pardoning all, and ultimately receiving them into favor again? A question of deepest interest, answered partly in nature and in history. The prevalence of misery in a world created by one who is Almighty, bespeaks a character, if merciful, yet certainly just. The deluge, the history of the Jews, chastened and disowned, the voice of conscience, and the natural forebodings which all men feel of a coming judgment, bespeak the existence somewhere of a holy law. But in *the cross* these questions are completely solved. If ever under God's government mercy might revolt against justice, it was surely here. The Saviour had been sold by the traitor, and deserted by His disciples. He had been assailed by false accusers, and condemned by a judge who acknowledged the injustice of the sentence. He is now handed over to a brutal soldiery and fickle people whom He had often befriended. It was hard to bear, and yet it was to be borne. He meekly drank the cup of His woe; and it was the Father who mingled it. It was His hand that held it to His lips. If tenderness could have saved our Lord, He must have been saved, for tenderness was there as the heart of man, in its hour of most impassioned feeling, has never conceived it. If mercy could have saved our race at a smaller cost, His death was a needless sacrifice. But it *behoved* Him to suffer. Divine pity ever leans on truth. Mercy, as she forces her way to the sinner, must do homage to justice, and pay the debt before she can free the captive. Nowhere else in the universe does the sanctity of law and the reality of the holiness of God stand out in bolder relief. The lesson is taught in *facts*, is proclaimed to heaven and earth, and may be read by all. There is mercy, but it is in harmony with justice. There is love, but it spends its force in the gift of the Son. Pardon there is, but it is obtained through no weakness in the law, through no fickleness or false benevolence on the part of the Judge!

Summary.

78. Whether, therefore, we look at the death of Christ as adapted of itself to excite pity and awe; to touch our religious feelings as guilty and miserable; to instruct and quicken our conscience in relation to ourselves, to religion, and morality, or to God, it is clearly "the power of God to every one that believeth." "*To every one that believeth;*" for without faith the whole sacrifice is robbed of its significance. I must believe that He is the gift of the Father's love; that in dying He does homage to law; that I deserve what He suffers; and that in earnestly pleading His death, I acknowledge my own guilt, and desire to be freed from it—or these truths are powerless. Believing them, forgiveness is inseparable from holiness.

Results affirmed in Scripture.

Nor let it be thought that we make more of this practical power of the cross than the Bible makes. It is the mightiest plea it employs. Christ "loved us, and gave Himself for us," and His love "constrains us to live not unto ourselves, but unto Him that died for us, and rose again." We "are bought with a price," and feel that we are therefore bound to glorify Him "in our bodies and spirits which are His." (2 Cor. v. 14; 1 Cor. vi. 20.) When is Christ set forth as "the power and wisdom of God?" As crucified. Where did He spoil "principalities and powers, and make a show of them openly?" On the cross. When was "the judgment of this world," and when was "the prince of this world cast out" from his throne? In the last hours of our Saviour's agony. What was the chosen theme of the most successful preacher who ever lived? "Jesus Christ and Him crucified," whom alone Paul determined to know. What is the vow of every Christian, and what the reason for it? "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." (1 Cor. ii. 2; Gal. vi. 14.) So completely in truth does this doctrine operate upon our virtue, and so adapted is it, by the view it gives of the consequences of sin, of the excellence of the law, of the love and faithfulness of God, of the tenderness and grace of Christ, that those who profess to receive it and are not virtuous, are represented not as the "enemies" of the precepts and example of Christ only, but as emphatically the "enemies of the cross." (Phil. iii. 18.)

Intercessor and priest.

79. The death of our Lord, as we have now viewed it, was the work of the *people.* "By wicked hands" was he crucified and slain. In another sense, it was the work of *God.* "According to His determinate counsel," He was delivered up into their hands. In yet a third sense, it was the work of our *Lord.* He gave Himself for us. He had power to lay down His life, and He had power to take it again. (John x. 18.) Dying, He was the *victim* offered once for all. Giving Himself to die, He was the intercessor and priest.

Properly the priesthood and intercession of Christ are terms that refer to His whole work. Derivately and in actual usage, they express *all* He has done for us. As priest, (ἱερεύς, *i. e.* ἱερὰ ρεζεῖν.) He attends to things that pertain to God; teaching His will, offering atonement for sin, bringing us near, and pleading on our behalf. As mediator (μεσίτης) or intercessor, He goes between God and man, satisfies divine justice, and removes from us the sentiment of wrath (ὀργή λειτȣργός) with which God cannot but regard iniquity. This blessing He achieves for our race, and at His own cost. Sent forth from God, He appears on earth, finishes His work, and then, as *our* (ἀπόϛολος) apostle (as well as our Father's), enters for us into the glory he had left. Having sanctified Himself for this office, He now sanctifies us, and is in His own person (ὁ ἁγιάζων. ἔγγυος.

πρόδρομος. ἀρχηγός,) the pledge of the fulfilment of every covenant promise, the forerunner and the author of our salvation.

More commonly, however, these terms are restricted in meaning to the work of Christ in heaven; especially the two first. He is high priest for ever. He liveth to make intercession for us. Even as so restricted, however, care must be taken to include in them all the Bible includes. The intercession of Christ is properly the completion of His sacrifice. It perpetuates the efficacy of His expiation. It bears to atonement the same relation that providence bears to creation. The covenant of pardon and eternal life is founded on the atonement of the cross; the administration of the covenant on the continuance of the power of the atonement in heaven. God created and now sustains. Christ died and now intercedes.

His work in heaven is to appear for us in our nature—(Heb. ix. 24; Acts vii. 56) as our substitute, having obeyed and suffered in our stead; and generally as our friend: to exhibit His atoning sacrifice as the ground on which the blessings for which He pleads may be bestowed, both largely and righteously, and to intimate His will, either in words or in some form of appeal yet more impressive, that the gifts He purchased may be shed down upon His Church. (Heb. ix. 10–12, 23; John xvii. 24; Heb. vii. 25.) So regarded, the intercession of our Lord justifies our largest expectations, and is the pledge of our final success.

Let it not be supposed, however, that this office of our Redeemer is needed to awaken the love of the Father, or to remind Him of what He might otherwise forget, or to draw down blessings which are grudgingly bestowed. In the *love* of the Father the office itself originated. His people and their interest are graven upon the palms of His hands, and He can never *forget* them. What He giveth, He giveth *liberally.* The office is rather a provision intended to impress upon all, that mercy is exercised even still in harmony with justice, and that our communion with God is ever through the mediation of Christ. Its first great truth is, that if God is at peace with sinners, it is through the sacrifice of the cross; and its second truth, that as Jesus pleads, so He must prevail, and they in Him. We are to come boldly to the throne, though ever feeling that it is a throne of grace. He links Himself with us as petitioner, asking His rights, that we may feel our dependence, and that we may be linked with Him as Heir and King.

CHAPTER VI.

CHRIST AS KING.

§ 1. THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD, AND LESSONS CONNECTED WITH IT.

§ 2. CHRIST THE KING OF HADES—THE FORERUNNER—THE FIRST FRUITS OF THEM THAT SLEPT.

§ 3. THE INVISIBLE KING.

§ 4. THE SECOND COMING OF OUR LORD

OUR LORD'S RESURRECTION, APPEARANCE, AND ASCENSION. FORTY DAYS.

Date.	Matthew.	Mark.	Luke.	John.	Place.	Ord. Nar.	Miracle.	Discourse.	Parable.
Apr. 7 Sund.	xxviii. 2–4	xvi. 1	—	—	Jerusalem.	Morning of the Resurrection.			
					”		Stone rolled away. The Resurrection.		
	xxviii. 1	xvi. 2–4	xxiv. 1–3	xx. 1, 2	”	Visit of the women. Mary Magdalene returns.			
	xxviii. 5–7	xvi. 5–7	xxiv. 4–8	—	”		Vision of angels at the sepulchre.		
	xxviii. 8–10	xvi. 8	xxiv. 9–11	—	”	The women return to the city. Jesus meets them.			
	—	—	xxiv. 12	xx. 3–10	”	Peter and John run to the sepulchre.			
	—	xvi. 9–11	—	xx. 11–18	”	Our Lord is seen by Mary Magdalene near the sepulchre.			
	xxviii. 11–15	—	—	—	”	Report of the watch.			
	1 Cor. xv. 5	xvi. 12–13	xxiv. 13–35	—	Jer. Emmaus	Our Lord seen by Peter: then by two disciples.			
Aftern Eveng.							Vanishes from their sight.		
	1 Cor. xv. 5	xvi. 14–18	xxiv. 36–49	xx. 19–23	Jerusalem.	Jesus appears to the Apostles, Thomas being absent.			
Apr. 14	—	—	—	xx. 24–29	”		The door being shut.		
					”		Appears again, Thomas being present.		
					”		Miraculous knowledge.		
	M. xxviii. 16	—	—	xxi. 1–24	Galilee.	The Apostles go into Galilee. Jesus appears to nine of them.			
	xxviii. 16–20			1 Cor. xv. 6	”	Jesus meets about five hundred brethren in Galilee.			
	Acts i. 3–8		—	1 Cor. xv. 7	Jerusalem.	Our Lord is seen of James, then of all the Apostles.			
May	Acts i. 9–12	xvi. 19–20	xxiv. 50–53	—	Bethany.		The Ascension.		
				xx. 30–31			Innumerable other miracles.		
		—	—	xxi. 25		Conclusion of John's Gospel.			
							Angels foretell his second coming. (Acts i. 10.)		

CHAPTER VI.

CHRIST AS KING.

SECT. 1.—THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD, AND LESSONS CONNECTED WITH IT.

Christ's death apparently the overthrow of the hopes of His disciples.

1. And now the overthrow of the scheme that Christ came to proclaim seems complete. His disciples had deserted Him; the boldest of their number had denied Him, and the Founder of the new faith has Himself been put to death. In this impression the apostles evidently shared. With the crucifixion of their Master, they seem to have abandoned all expectation of the establishment of His kingdom.

Change in their views.

2. Within six weeks, however, after this apparent termination of their hopes, the views of the disciples are entirely changed. We find them again assembled in Jerusalem, neither sorrowing nor despondent, but declaring publicly that the Jesus, whom the Jews with wicked hands had crucified and slain, was both Lord and Christ, and that through faith in Him alone are men to be accepted and forgiven. (Acts ii. 36.)

Explanation.

3. And what intermediate historical fact is there to explain this transition? Christ has re-appeared among them; He is raised from the dead; their faith in His previous promises has thence received a

new impulse; and convictions have been imparted which were before unknown. His resurrection has given the idea of new and even closer communion with Him; communion, moreover, which is never to be dissolved. According to their own assertions—assertions repeated in one form or another more than fifty times in the Acts and Epistles—this event was the foundation of their steadfast faith in His person and in Himself as Messiah, as well as of their own certain hope of a blessed immortality. His resurrection, in fact, justified their previous convictions, and for ever confirmed them.

His resurrection.

4. This issue of His death He had Himself foretold. "I have power to lay down my life, and I have power," said He, "to take it again." (John x. 17, 18.) Elsewhere, even more clearly (Matt. xvi. 21; xvii. 23; Luke ix. 22; Mark ix. 31), specifying in these passages the precise interval of three days, during which He was to remain in the grave. The full import of these predictions, however, had been hidden from the disciples; nor did they gather comfort from them till now they were fulfilled.

Foretold by himself.

5. But if this was to be the issue of the sufferings of our Lord, must it not have deprived them of much of their bitterness? A difficulty that cannot be perfectly solved. It is answered, however, as far as it can be answered, in the mystery of His incarnation, and the nature of His atonement. The consciousness that death was but a passage to glory did not prevent the struggle of nature with suffering, especially such suffering as His for our sins. We know that He reached heaven through faith (Heb. xii. 2), as must all His followers; and His sacrifice lost as little of its moral import, and His sufferings as little of their intensity from the assurance of His resurrection, as do the present trials of believers from the equally certain assurance of an immortal life.

Difficulty of these previous predictions.

The resurrection an evidence and consolation only to disciples.

6. Paley has pointed out the fact, that if the Gospel had been a forgery, the inspired writers would never have represented Christ as appearing after His resurrection to His *disciples only;* and no doubt this remark is just. But there is in the fact itself a still deeper truth. During His life He showed Himself to *all*, beseeching men to be reconciled, and attracting their confidence by services of unwearied love; but in His resurrection He was known only to *His own.* It was a miracle, by which believers were to be convinced. Those whose hearts had received no saving impression from His ministry, would have received no such impression from His re-appearance. If the living Christ had not led them to repentance, neither were they to be persuaded though He rose from the dead.

A preparation for invisible communion.

7. Another reason still is suggested by the fact, that His resurrection was not only intended to seal and confirm the faith of those who already believed, but also to teach to such the great lesson, that communion with a visible Saviour was now to yield to communion with a spiritual being ever present, though mostly invisible. Forty days He remained on earth to give them the full assurance that He was risen—to afford them a clearer insight into the mysteries of His kingdom; but only forty days, for He did not mean them to cleave to any visible manifestation of Himself. His re-appearance was but a preparation for higher and eternal union. To such as believed, therefore, it was an instructive lesson and a decisive evidence; but to unbelievers it would have been inappropriate and useless.

Christ appears to disciples only.

8. In accordance with this fact He appeared to His disciples only, and all His appearances were in love; that love showing itself differently, however, according to the condition of its object.

Such as were in sorrow it soothed; such as were walking in light it gladdened; such as had gone astray it rebuked and restored.

Christ's first appearance.

Successive appearances.

9. Christ's first appearance was graciously afforded to the two women who visited His tomb. As they returned in sadness from the place where He had lain, He met them. They were filled at once with joy, surprise, and fear. Immediately they fell before Him and embraced His feet. "Be not afraid," said He; and then bade them go and announce His resurrection to His disciples, of whom he spoke as His "brethren."

Second appearance.

Next He visits Mary, who had remained at the grave oppressed with grief and anxiety. Seeing Him unexpectedly in the morning twilight, she did not know Him; He therefore called her by name, and immediately she recognized His voice. With an exclamation of joy she stretched forth her hands, probably intending to touch Him, but Christ warned her that He had not yet ascended to His Father; that the time of His union with His people (of which He had previously spoken) was not yet come; and that henceforth the fellowship that was to subsist between Himself and His disciples was to be not personal, but spiritual: "Cleave not," therefore says He, "to me; for I am not yet ascended to my Father."

Third appearance. Fourth.

Early in the afternoon of the same day, He appeared to Peter (Luke xxiv. 33, 34; 1 Cor. xv. 5); and later to two disciples going to Emmaus, a small village a mile distant from Jerusalem. They had heard that the body of Christ was not found in the sepulchre; but the news that He had appeared to any had not reached them. As they walked, they conversed freely of all that had occurred, and of the disappointment of their hopes. While absorbed in conversation a stranger joined them, and took part in it. By degrees he ascertained their feeling, and thence began to expound the Scriptures, and to show that the facts which were shaking their faith ought really to confirm it. "For thus," said he, "it behoved Christ to suffer." Under the power of His teaching, their hearts burned within them—a new light dawned upon their souls. The person of the speaker, however, was not recognized; they were not aware of the appearance of their risen Lord; perhaps their attention was so occupied with the thoughts He uttered, that they did not particularly notice His appearance; or perhaps His sufferings and resurrection had somewhat changed Him. When they arrived, therefore, at their journey's end, "He made as if He would have gone farther." He had no reason to intrude upon them, but they courteously urged Him to remain, and on His complying they courteously gave Him the place of the host. Before they began, He pronounced a blessing, then brake the bread and gave it them; and in this act they discerned the Friend who had so often sat with them at table and shared their meal. (Luke xxiv. 30, 31.)

Fifth appearance.

Christ seems to have returned to Jerusalem; and in the evening of the same day He met the assembled apostles, all being present except Thomas. On the following Lord's day He appeared to the apostles again, Thomas being with them. Afterwards He appeared to seven of them on the Sea of Tiberias; then in the mountain of Galilee to the apostles, and the five hundred other brethren; then to James; then again to the eleven at Jerusalem, immediately before His ascension.

Sixth. Seventh. Eighth. Ninth. Tenth.

Conduct and language highly instructive.

10. His conduct and language on these different occasions are highly instructive.

When He first appeared to the disciples they were assembled with closed doors, and suddenly He stood in the midst of them, and said, repeating the usual salutation, though with deeper significance: "Peace be unto you." "And they were affrighted, supposing they had seen a spirit." He gently rebuked their fears; and, to prove that He was there in bodily presence, He appealed to His hands and His feet, and ate before them. He then explained to them the Scriptures, and opened their hearts to understand them. And then were "the disciples glad when they saw the Lord."

His language to the disciples at His first visit.

Again He said: "Peace be unto you;" and added, "As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you;" thus consecrating them as the messengers of His peace to men.

He then breathed upon them, as a symbol of the inspiration they were to receive from the Father to prepare them to preach His gospel, and to proclaim in His name forgiveness of sins. That this symbolical act might be clearly significant, He added the explanation: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." His previous disclosures must now have been remembered by them. Their higher life probably became stronger; though what farther was implied in this act was not imparted till the day of Pentecost. It was indeed affirmed to be partly prophetic, and had reference to the promise of the Father, and the power with which they were hereafter to be endued from on high. (Mark xvi. 17, 18.)

His language at His second visit.

11 The week following Christ appeared to the eleven a second time, when Thomas was with them. Again He stood mysteriously in their midst, offering the very sign that Thomas had unbelievingly required. "Reach hither thy finger," said He, "and behold My hands:"—a manifestation at once of knowledge and of love, that drew from this disciple an expression of faith stronger than any that we have yet heard from the disciples: "My Lord and my God." (John

xx. 27, 28.) This utterance of faith sprang clearly rather from outward evidence than from inward feeling: and therefore Christ adds, when expressing His acceptance of it, the significant promise: "Because thou hast seen thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed;" intimating that in after time true faith must be impossible if it depend on present sensible signs of assurance; and that such true faith, connected as it is with the consciousness of religious want, and the perception of Christ's grace, rather than with visible evidence, is doubly blessed.

His language in later visits.

12. In later appearances Peter is formally reinstated in his office, and his fears are removed; the disciples are commissioned to preach the gospel to every creature, and to admit men of all nations to Christ's communion and fellowship.* He assures them (the

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* We think it somewhat surprising that our author should pass so cursorily over the final GREAT COMMISSION; under which all Christ's ministers must proceed in the spread of Christianity throughout the world. "It is required of stewards," says the apostle, "that a man be found faithful;" and this Commission, without doubt, is *the ultimate rule and test of our fidelity.*

It is, indeed, a just and beautiful view of Dr. Angus, that the ministers of Christ are authorized by the Commission, to "admit men of all nations to Christ's communion and fellowship." But this language is too general to convey to any intelligent reader, much less to an intelligent heathen, any definite ideas of the prescribed order, or manifold nature of that fellowship. The least that could be said with propriety, it seems to us, would be to point out that this communion with Christ required in the Commission is threefold—*vital,* by faith in the Gospel; *visible,* by baptism in the Triune Name; and *practical,* by a life of universal obedience to His will—"teaching them to observe *all things whatsoever* I have commanded you." This is Gospel order. The Acts and the Epistles show how faithfully the apostles observed it. In so doing we act in communion with Christ—we walk in His light, and He is with us to the end of the world. But let no man deceive himself. "If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth." (1 John i. 6.)—J. N. B.

assurance being given in instructive connection with their last commission) that all authority is given to Him in Heaven and in earth, and that He will be with them even unto the end.

Christ ascends.

13. During one of these interviews, the old worldly spirit of the disciples again appeared; and they asked Him whether He intended then to establish His kingdom in its glory? "It is not for you," He contents Himself with replying, "to know the times and the seasons." (Acts i.) You know your own calling, and I have given you a promise whereby that calling shall be fulfilled, even the promise of the Spirit; all else you may leave with me. With this reply and this promise, he was carried up out of their sight; ascending in His glorified human nature to His Father.

Glorified human nature now in heaven. In this nature Christ ever appears.

14. And now the great work of Christ's incarnation is complete. In ancient times He was spoken of as "the Angel of God," "the Angel of His presence," the Messenger of the covenant," "the Lord." In some of the prophets (especially Ezekiel and Daniel) "His likeness is as the appearance of a man." Henceforth these titles cease: likeness has become reality. It is the APPEARANCE of a man no more, for His manhood has been verified and adored. *The glory has taken a permanent form*, and as a glorified man He is ever after set forth in the book of God. As such He stands in the midst of the golden candlesticks; as such He Himself tells us He will hereafter be seen, "sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven;" and as such, when the judgment is past, His name will be made excellent in all worlds.

Peculiarities of the Gospels preserved till the close.

15. To the very close the Gospels retain their peculiarities; and nowhere are those peculiarities more strikingly seen than in the narrative of our Lord's ascension. In *Matthew* it is the

Messiah claiming rightful dominion, and promising His presence. "All *authority* is given unto Me in heaven and earth. Go ye, and teach all nations: Lo, I am with you;" and this position he seems to occupy still, for nothing follows to weaken the impressiveness of this last utterance. He still stands in the attitude of authority and of love. In *Mark* He is received up into heaven; but as His apostles go forth to preach His Gospel, He is spoken of as working with them, and confirming their words with signs following. There we have Christ in his energy and might. In *Luke* he appears as a man; as a priest taken from among men, executing the functions of His priestly office; for as He is parted from His followers, He lifts up His hands and blesses them. Luke had commenced his history with the man Jesus in his infancy, and in His various human relations; and he now closes it with a view of the same Jesus, a man still, though risen and glorified; entering the heavenly temple, and as He enters it, receiving man's adoration and praise. In *John*, again, the great office of the Comforter, Christ's representative on earth, is distinctly revealed. He is to reign in the place of the Lord, and, therefore, after a beautiful exhibition of Christ's dignity, as attested by Thomas, and a no less beautiful exhibition of His love, as shown in His treatment of Peter, Christ is mysteriously withdrawn. The last scene shows us Peter and John following Him. The Gospel ends, and we see Him no more.

We may say, therefore, that in *Matthew* he is everywhere Messiah, the Prince. In *Mark* he ascends to the right hand of power, as the Captain of Salvation, in order to share the ministry of His servants. In *Luke*, as the Priest to be alone in the sanctuary of heaven; and in *John*, as the Son of the Father, introducing the children to the Father's house, and quietly leaving the interests of His kingdom to the immediate government of His Spirit.

Influence of Christ's incarnation in uniting all creatures.

16. The permanent influence of the presence of Christ in heaven, of Christ as having our nature in union with His own, it is not difficult to conceive. By this union He has embraced in one bond of love all intermediate orders of intelligences, without annulling any real and native difference. He has thus introduced a law of relationship, which obliges the highest to recognise the lowest, and enables the lowest, without presumption, to take the place assigned them. The Incarnate Word now glorified, brings together in the mystery of His person the angelic and the human —the most recent and the most ancient of God's intelligent tribes. Things in heaven and things on earth find a common centre in Him.

Influence of His ascension on the minds of His disciples.

17. Nor can we be surprised at the result of this mysterious change on the minds of his disciples. "They worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy: and were continually in the Temple, praising and blessing God." Sorrow had filled their hearts, but henceforth their worship was praise, and their whole life a psalm. The First Fruits of the Resurrection had been accepted for them, and the feast of the resurrection, like every feast of first fruits, must be kept with joy. Another festival was indeed at hand, and at Pentecost the first fruits of all their ground, in yet another sense, were to be offered to God. (Lev. xxiii. 10.) But independently of that blessing, Jesus and the resurrection formed now their feast, and with no other feelings than of gladness could they look upon Him. His new life, His glorified nature, the first trophy ever won from the grave, was at once the pledge and the model of their own.

SECT. 2.—CHRIST THE KING OF HADES. THE FORERUNNER. THE FIRST FRUITS OF THEM THAT SLEPT.

18. The great questions that have continued to perplex all heathen nations in their religious inquiries, relate to *God*, his nature, and attributes; to *holiness*, its rules, and motives; and to *another life*, its reality, and the preparation for it. On all these questions it may be said that the heathen have no knowledge. They form conjectures, sometimes commendable, sometimes fearfully defective; but KNOWLEDGE they have none. All these questions, however, are answered in the Gospel. In Christ we have *God* manifest in the flesh; in His life and person we have *law* embodied; and we have now to consider His relation to the future. His very incarnation solves innumerable difficulties connected with the Godhead; His life and teaching are no less decisive in regard to ethical questions; while in His resurrection and ascension we find "life and immortality brought to light," revealed with as much clearness as is consistent with our condition.

The three-fold difficulties of heathenism. ἐν τῇ σοφία του ϑέου.

How solved in the Gospel.

19. The teaching of Scripture on this question is highly instructive. It calls Him the conqueror of death. He has the keys of the invisible state. (Rev. iii. 7.) "He shutteth and no man openeth; he openeth and no man shutteth." He is our *forerunner*, for he hath shown us the path of life. "For us He has entered within the veil." One in *human* form has passed through the dark valley—has gone in a nature, on which death can have no more dominion, into the presence of God, and has become a *pledge* of the *ingathering* of the whole harvest of the Church. As *conqueror* he has gained a right to complete our redemption. As *forerunner* he has shown us in what senses, and to what an extent, our redemption will be complete.

The question of another life solved by the Gospel.

Its threefold aspect.

And as the *first fruits* of them that sleep, He gives the assurance of the accomplishment of His work, and of the final manifestation of the sons of God.

What is Immortality?—Christ illustrates it as the Forerunner.

21. But what is immortality, and what the future life on which men are to enter? Questions which the heathen answer in most contradictory forms; proving the correctness of their replies, even when sound, by arguments altogether inconclusive.

Opinions of the heathen.

With many of them future life was something between being and not being—a state corresponding to the state of man's mind in dreams or in infancy. Its happiness, even in the case of the noble and generous, was unreal, "a shadow dealt out to shadows;" or, if it assumed form and substance, it was sensual only.

With some it was the destruction of all individual consciousness, the annihilation of distinct personal existence, the absorption by the Spirit of the Universe of all individual derived spirits. With none did it involve or suppose the revivification of the body. Hence Achilles preferred the condition of the meanest slave on earth to the very highest of the unsubstantial glories of Elysium. Hence Homer describes the souls of his heroes as going to the shades, and the heroes themselves (αὐτοὺς δὲ) as a prey to dogs and birds. Hence also the remarkable fact, that nowhere in ancient systems was the punishment of another life made a practical motive to virtue.

Reasons in support of their views.

The arguments employed to prove even such a future life, as some were disposed to admit, were none of them conclusive. The soul, it was said, is not material, and therefore it cannot die. There are serious irregularities in this life, said others, and a future state of retribution is necessary to vindicate the justice of God, and to equalise His dealings. Men are capable of continued improvement, and have evidently a disposition to entertain fears and hopes of something after death. And, it was sometimes added, is not eternal happiness a necessary consequence of virtue; or if not, then of the goodness of the Creator? Thus they reasoned, but never in such forms as to produce conviction. Probability was the utmost point they ever reached, and the probability was never practical.

It is in Christ only that life and immortality *have been brought to light;* and it is in the Gospel only that the powers of the world to come (to use that expression with new meaning) exercise holy influence over men's hearts. In the Gospel, moreover, the same act that seals our title to it reveals its nature, and proves its reality; the resurrection, namely, of our Lord. Mortal life with its humiliation and fears, death with its anguish and dismay, and Hades (the world unseen), were all included in His victory. He subdued and explained them all; and by a double title—the title of conquest and of experience—has gained authority alike over the dead and the living.

Our knowledge and faith the result of an actual fact.

22. To the Christian, therefore, the hope of immortality is not merely an inference of reason. Nor is it a feeling excited by a mere verbal promise, which might be interpreted with latitude of meaning. It is a deduction from an actual fact, all the parts of which have been set before us. Our conclusions are not fancy, nor even reason. They are knowledge. If the future had only been *announced*, analogy and conscience might have suggested, no doubt, many cheering lessons, and have justified the conclusion that, after a protracted probation and successive stages of improvement, the human soul might reach a higher state of enjoyment and of virtue. But any such scheme would clearly have formed a striking contrast to that blessedness which the Gospel reveals. Christ has gone through the several stages of our course, and we know from His history that there is but a step be-

tween us and the highest promotion. One who was made in all points like unto us, has, *in our view*, trodden upon the earth, and passed immediately "into the heavens," entering from this earth into the presence of God, nor fearing to show Himself there in the form of man.

Christ illustrates it as the first fruits.

What that future life is, may be said, in one sense, to be unrevealed. The fact of our personal consciousness, the spiritual elements of the state itself, are indeed told us; but the mode of life, its transactions, its condition, are all hidden. And wisely hidden; for human life would be a burden, and human probation an impossibility, if heaven and hell were present to the senses as they are now to our faith. This much only *is* told us, that when we come to the end of our course, and our next step must rest upon ground that is unseen, we have but to put our hand into Christ's hand and be led by Him. Trusting His guidance and care we are secure; on that unseen ground He stands; over it He reigns. The awful solemnity of entering upon it He has known. If in that hour our hearts begin to fail, we have but to realise the personal affection of our Redeemer—to remember, that the moment we cast off our moorings (ἀνάλυσις) from the shores of mortality, we are at once and forever with the Lord. If we long for a clearer conception of what this union involves, we are shut up to analogies and figures We know only that it includes whatever is involved in the union of the members with the Head—that Head itself divine. We are heirs with Him. We shall share His glory. We shall possess something incorruptible and undefiled. What these expressions precisely mean, we know not; but they mean something which human nature can bear; something adapted to that nature, and in its condition of perfect holiness; something, in short, which is a reward even to Him who is "the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of His person;" something that repays the agonies of the garden and the cross; and this knowledge is enough.

23. And if, again, the question be raised, how can man live again, and with what body will he come? we have at once an answer in the resurrection of our Lord. It is human nature in its essential elements, though glorified, that is to inherit eternity. The very body now subject to dissolution is to escape the power of death, and to appear in imperishable vigor. The animal tendencies of our frame will doubtless cease. "When THIS mortal puts on immortality," what is *natural* will become *spiritual;* but that frame will be a body still. To suppose that it will be a mere rudiment, something saved from the wreck of the former tabernacle, and only needed to connect the earthly with the heavenly state, is to rob the language of Scripture of its significance. "Our citizenship (ἡ πολιτέια) is in heaven, whence we look for the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile bodies and fashion them like unto His glorious body, by that mighty power whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself." (Phil. iii. 21) The very nature of the change is illustrated and confirmed in the resurrection of our Lord.

So He illustrates our resurrection.

24. And this state is to be uninterrupted and endless: 'while life, or thought, or being last.' "Ever with the Lord," is the phrase that indicates the nature, and origin, and duration of our joy; conformed to His image in body and in spirit, and therefore in bliss.

So our endless life.

25. An obvious objection to these doctrines is their sublimity, and the disproportionateness between them and man. That human nature should be thus ennobled, gifted in all its faculties with an endless life, and with a chief place in the family of God, seems so little accordant with our deserts or present condition, that we shrink at first from affirming or admitting it.

Objection to these doctrines founded on their sublimity.

Answered by the fact of man's original greatness, and

26. But let the truth of man's original creation and the truth of Christ's death be considered, and the objection is answered. Human wisdom commits here a double mistake. Looking at man as he is, it assumes for him, in his own unassisted power, too much. Looking at man as originally created, it assigns to him as certainly too little. Man as redeemed it entirely disregards. The inspired writers, on the other hand, while they deal faithfully with man in regard to his actual corruption, magnify, without scruple, his character as related to God and the future. The general style of the Bible prepares us, in fact, to receive whatever it may declare to be his ultimate destiny. Its first statement concerning us foreshadows our final greatness: "God created man in His own image. In the image of God created He him." The very aim of the New Testament confirms this view; for its great and precious promises were revealed that we might be made partakers of a "divine nature." And constantly is human salvation spoken of as a restoration and recovery. It brings man back to the state he has lost. In it we are "begotten *again* to a lively hope."

By the mystery of the scheme of redemption.

27. But it is the scheme of redemption which makes these expressions not only intelligible, but almost natural. That scheme sets forth the fact, indeed, that man is to live forever, and as part of the family of the blessed God. But it lessens the surprise excited by this miracle by announcing another. This result is, it tells us, the effect of the union of our nature with the Divine in the person of the Messiah. The second includes the first, as the greater includes the less; and the miracle of the results is forgotten in the miracle of the means.

Men identified with Christ,

This truth of the indissoluble union between Christ and His disciples, He continually exhibits in His teaching; sometimes in figures of speech, and sometimes in literal statements. Christ calls Himself "the shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep." He is a vine, and the source of life to every branch. Nor is this enough. It is part of His intercessory prayer for His followers, that "they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee; that they may be one in us." Language can scarcely be more intense or decisive. His oneness with the Father is made a type of our oneness with Him.

And hence immortal.

28. As, therefore, Christ is Himself "the Prince of life," "the living One," "He who has life in Himself," who is "the life and the light of men," who "liveth for evermore," "whose goings forth are from everlasting," and who is Himself "the Father of an eternal age," so all His followers share His existence, and are identified with His eternity. "Because He lives they shall live also." They may, therefore, fear extinction only when He, the Lord of life, is Himself no more.

SECT. 3.—THE INVISIBLE KING.

The Gospel overthrows all idolatry,

29. Zechariah has described in a beautiful prediction the nature and the results of the Gospel. "In that day," says he, "a fountain shall he opened for all sin to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem:" and, as the consequence of this blessing, "the idols shall cease from the land." This prediction has been partially fulfilled. The fountain is opened, and as Christianity extends, idolatry recedes.

and makes God the object of supreme love.

30. But, in the Bible sense of the word, idolatry includes more than the adoration of an image. It includes the withdrawal of a spiritual affection from God, and the bestowment of that affection on other beings. It is a sin not of outward worship only, but of the heart. When, therefore, idolatry is forbidden in the Bible, it is implied that God, and God only, is to be the object of supreme love. Reverence and obe-

dience are ultimately due only to Him; and it is the recognition of this truth which is to be an evidence and the result of the success of the Gospel. The tenor of all ancient prophecy confirms this prediction. When the mountain of the Lord's house is established on the top of the mountains . . . the idols shall be utterly abolished. (Is. ii. 1–17.)

And yet supreme love and worship are ascribed and due to Christ.

31. And yet both in Scripture prediction and in Scripture history we have an apparently contradictory fact. Every where throughout the Bible a mysterious Being is found besides Jehovah, vested with Divine honors. To this Being, He himself assures us, there has been committed a power which embraces all things in heaven and in earth; while elsewhere we find intimations which seem to teach that His authority is recognised in other worlds besides our own. Apostles pray to Him. Pious men ascribe to Him, their creation, and forgiveness, and safety. Titles of highest dignity are awarded to Him. "On His thigh is a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords." He is even the "Prince of the kings of the earth." One prophet, Jude, quotes from another to show that He is surrounded by ten thousands of His saints, and that He is to be our Judge; and the last book of inspiration discloses the fact that heaven resounds with His praise, owing to Him the very light that fills and beautifies the place.

Not assumed by Him, but given by *the Father*, and flowing from our obligations.

32. This dignity, moreover, is not assumed by Himself, but formally given to Him by the Father as the consequence of His human nature. The Father gave Him this authority, "because He is the Son of man." For the same reason Christians render Him homage. As the Son He redeemed us, and therefore we *love* Him. As the Son He offers us salvation, and we *believe on Him*. As the Son He is to receive us to glory, and we *hope* in Him. As the Son He

is our strength and life, and we *rejoice in Him.* As the Son He is our king and head, and we *obey* and *adore* Him. These emotions, moreover, are supreme. They constitute all that we have to offer—love, and fear, and joy; adoration, obedience, and praise.

This supreme love and worship *not* idolatry, for Christ is God.

33. Nor is there really any contradiction between these facts and the language of the prophets. The Son of Man is not the rival God of the Creator. The dictate of Scripture, which bids us to worship God, is not here at war with the impulse of the heart which bids us to worship man. The appointed Sovereign and the eternal Sovereign are one. Our nature is interwoven with the Godhead. The Redeemer is King, and the Father is honored in the Son.

This supremacy is Christ's kingship.

Its peculiarities.

34. This supremacy of Christ is His Kingship; it rests on a foundation which forms part of the very throne of God. His *dominion* is established in human *hearts.* It is founded in *willing submission.* It is maintained by *spiritual authority.* It is established in righteousness. It will ultimately unite heaven and earth. It begins, as we have found, in individual conversion. Its grandest earthly manifestation will be seen in the general extension of truth; the richest and noblest manifestation of all will be seen in heaven. Christ's death founds it; Christ's Spirit forms it; Christ's will (which is ever in harmony with the will of the Father) rules it; Christ's glory (which is also the glory of the Father, and comprehends the full blessedness of the redeemed) is its end.

Where the Gospel is proclaimed, and men believe, a kingdom is founded, and this kingdom is to be universal.

35. The establishment of this kingdom is the great theme of ancient prophecy, and the very purpose of the gospel. Nearly every narrative of Christ's sufferings ends in the creation of a Church co-extensive with our race. The stone which the builders rejected is immediately seen as the head of the corner. (Ps. cxviii. 22.)

The most mournful of the ancient predictions first shows Him as despised and afflicted, and then as having the many for His portion, and the mighty for His spoil. (Is. liii.) The 22d Psalm, which opens with His awful exclamation, My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" and runs through every mood of sadness, closes with the assurance that all the ends of the earth shall worship before God.

These predictions are fulfilled in the record of His life. The sufferings of Christ terminate in the glory which should follow. He made reconciliation for iniquity, brought in an everlasting righteousness, that all peoples, and nations, and languages may serve Him. He tasted death for every man, and God hath therefore crowned Him with glory and honor. Because He took upon Him the form of a servant, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, "God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Phil. ii. 9, 10.)

The King Himself unseen.

36. And yet the Governor of this kingdom is Himself unseen. His Church is established and extending. The members of His living body are all complete, but there is no visible head. The dome of the temple seems perfect, but the top-stone, which binds and sustains the whole, is hidden in the clouds. Christ's is clearly an invisible reign. To the world the church is His only visible representative upon earth. In the church herself we have only the Spirit, whose presence on earth we enjoy on the condition, it seems, of the absence of the Lord. "It is expedient," said He to His disciples, "that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter cannot come; but if I go, I will send him unto you. And he shall take of mine, and show it unto you." (John xvi. 7.)

All the reasons of this arrangement not revealed; some are.

37. The wisdom and necessity of this arrangement we cannot thoroughly understand. A thousand proprieties may be harmonized by it, and possibly all classes of intelligent beings are contemplating the fact, and admiring it on different grounds. We may, however, notice one or two of the subordinate fitnesses involved in it, connected especially with the condition of the church.

Nor must it be thought that in thus attempting to find in ourselves reasons for this procedure, we are attaching to man an importance which he may not justly claim. The whole tenor of Scripture sanctions what would else be proud assumption. The promotion of human interests is every where reckoned one great end, amongst deeper reasons doubtless, of the dispensations of God. When Christ emptied Himself of glory, and visited our world in poverty and weakness, it was for our sakes He became poor. (2 Cor. viii. 9.) After He entered it, He endured sufferings most mysterious and intense; carrying our griefs and bearing our sorrows. (Is. liii.) He then passed into glory, not reigning on earth or continuing with His followers; and the reason He has Himself given: "It is expedient for you that I go." (John xvi. 7.) His exaltation even has direct reference to our welfare. He ascended to receive gifts for men, and to become our advocate with God. Clearly then we *may* regard the indivisibility of Christ in connection with His church, and seek in that connection for some of the reasons of the arrangement.

A universal kingdom requires an invisible king.

38. It is obvious then, first of all, that if Christ's kingdom is to be co-extensive with the world, and its members are to be scattered through all lands, this universality is best secured by the influence of an unseen Ruler, and an energy purely spiritual. To fix Christ's position on earth; to announce that He was here rather than there, would inevitably result in

collecting the church round one centre of influence and blessing. Now, the image of His reign is the air, or the light, the element that surrounds the earth, sustaining and purifying all that breathe. Under another constitution this image would fail, and the church would become a scene of exclusiveness and privilege appropriated by such only as happen to reside in the vicinity of the court, or have personal access to the Great King. There might in that case be light and warmth at the centre, but at the extremities we should have little else than coldness and death.

Condition of the world, and of the church adapted to this state.

39. Nor need we insist on difficulties which the supposition of a visible king would involve, difficulties, however, both obvious and important. Where could we find a place for such a being, constituted as the world and the church are? Are they either of them moulded into meetness for His personal presence, or are they likely to be under the existing conditions of our probation? And even if a place could be found for Him, and Christ did appear, is it conceivable that such a visitant could reside amongst us without disarranging the business of life? If He came in humiliation, would men recognise His majesty? If in glory, would not the veneration of those who love Him, and the curiosity of the world, be destructive of all attention to earthly concerns? Would it be possible, moreover, for our eyes to behold Him? It is certain that when apostles saw Him in the transfiguration, they fell on their faces and were sore afraid: and even the disciple who knew Him so well, when in Patmos he saw His glory, fell at His feet as dead. Till therefore the church is free from all impediments, till earthly duties and earthly relations cease or change, till we have spiritual bodies to make the presence of Christ no longer isolated or partial, our very physical

condition demands that Christ be unseen. His invisibility seems essential to His reign.

Faith, the principle of spiritual life, is attachment to the invisible.

40. A second reason of this arrangement is found in the spiritual life of all Christians. Faith is its basis and condition; but faith is the ground and confidence of things hoped for, the conviction of things *not* seen. By this principle man's spiritual life is maintained, and to perfect it is one grand design of nature, providence, and revealed truth.

Upon our faith, moreover, all holiness depends. It is the chief element of happiness and of virtue; and as the whole are perfected by use, an invisible Redeemer is required to meet this necessity of our condition. Faith, to conquer, must fight. Hope, to be triumphant, must not see. Love must seek its object through clouds and darkness; patience have her perfect work, and even joy smile through tears. A visibly present Christ would interrupt their process: stop our growth, or bring on a forced maturity. In any case it is a blessing adapted only to the perfection of heaven.

Christ unseen, the church is conformed to his humiliation.

41. A third reason is found in the fact that Christ's kingdom is designed to be in every condition the image of Himself. It is to reflect Him in His humiliation, as well as in His triumph; and, by progressive stages, to grow up in all things into Him who is the Head. "The Head of man," says the apostle, "is Christ, and the Head of Christ is God." (1 Cor. xi. 3.) Our relation therefore to Him is analogous to His relation to the Father. Suffering is the condition of our glory, and the apostle Peter tells us it was the condition of Christ's. His suffering consisted, in its essence, in the absence of the Father: ours consists, in a great measure, in the absence of our Lord. His sufferings ceased on His ascension; and ours cease at His second coming.

Herein again "He hath left us an example that we should follow His steps."

He is, however, present in His church, and in each member.

42. But though not visibly present with His church, Christ is with her, both in the whole body and in each of its members. He has promised to be with her always, even unto the end of the world; He has declared her to be "His fullness, (or completion,) the fullness of Him that filleth all in all."

Individual members are instructed that the same truth is applicable to them; they are told that they "eat His flesh and drink His blood;" that Christ is in them except they be reprobates; that if He be in them "the body is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness," and that "they live, yet not they, but Christ liveth in them." That Christ Himself, therefore, will inhabit the hearts of His people and reign in them, entire in each and entire in all, is His own clear and reiterated promise.

But what do these expressions involve? *All* that they involve none perhaps can tell. The presence and influence of His Spirit is certainly involved: and, judging from the facts of His own history, perhaps more.

Personally perhaps.

43. We know that He Himself was God manifest in the flesh, Deity enshrined in our nature; and we know that, moreover, the Holy Ghost was given without measure unto Him. Applying this case to our own, it may, perhaps, be said, that as Christ is God, He pervades, by His mysterious omnipresence, the whole body of His earthly followers, and each of them. As *God* He is certainly the appropriate source and principle of holiness; as *man*, He is the appropriate channel for its conveyance. As *God-man*, therefore, He is both spring and stream; Himself the holiness He gives; Himself the divine nature, which, through His Spirit, is to be united by Him with our own.

and certainly by His Spirit.

44. Or, if we take lower ground, we have then the truth that Christ reigns by His Spirit in the church; an agency which the previous supposition does not however supersede. Over and above the personal indwelling of Christ (if that view be admitted), the faithful follower of Christ is blessed with the presence of the indwelling Spirit himself; not indeed as an independent agent, but as proceeding from Christ, and as representing Him. This last modification is important, because it secures the dignity of our Lord, and harmonizes the statements of Scripture. Hence He is called the "Spirit of the Son," "the Spirit of Jesus." Hence it is that the two divine Personages bear in the scheme of mediation the same title; they are both *Paracletes,*—Comforters, Teachers, Exhorters, Helpers, and Advocates. The WORK of intercession, which, perhaps, the title mainly implies, is expressly said to be carried on by both. (See John xiv. 16; 1 John ii. 1; Rom. viii. 26.) As Christ is the consolation of Israel, so the Spirit is the other Comforter (still the same term); expressions that imply the complete adaptation of both to human nature in all its misery and wants.

The Spirit honors and reveals Christ.

45. It is a consequence of this view of His office that all the duties of the Spirit have reference to Christ. The things He reveals are things that belong to him. "He shall receive of mine," said our Lord, "and shall show it unto you; He shall bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I HAVE TOLD YOU; He shall not speak of himself αφ' ἑαυτοῦ. (*i. e.* of His own authority), but whatscever He shall hear, that shall He speak." His power of convincing the world, whether of sin, or of righteousness, or of judgment, is exercised with exclusive reference to the work of the Redeemer; He will prove to men that they are guilty, for they do not believe: that they are to be justified only in Christ, and amply in Him,

for He has ascended to the Father, and that His is the only authority, for the power of the prince of this world is justly condemned and is now overthrown. So complete is this practical identification, that the position of both in the world is the same. By Christ, of himself it was said, "The world hateth me," and "hath not known me;" and of the Spirit, He said," "The world cannot receive Him, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him." (John xv. 18; John xiv. 17.)

Father, Son, and Spirit, all concerned in redemption.

46. What an affecting view does this give of our nature and of Divine love: the Father and the Son and the Spirit, all subjected to rejection, and all bearing with our guilt and seeking our recovery!

The acts of all in a sense the acts of each.

47. It is owing (it may be added) to this miraculous union of these divine persons, that they are represented as co-operating in each part of the work of human redemption. It is now "the Spirit that giveth life," and now it is Christ, the second Adam, who is "made a quickening Spirit." (1 Cor. xv. 45.) So when CHRIST is in us, "the Spirit is life;" and our law is "the law of the *Spirit of life* in Christ." (Rom. viii. 2, 10.) Every act of each person of the blessed Trinity is thus the act of all: nothing seems done in which all are not, though diversely, the agents; a union that is made to represent the union of the church—that "they all may be one," said our Lord, "as we are one."

By the Spirit Christ reigns.

48. The effect of the work of the Spirit in the heart is simply the subjugation of all to Christ. He imparts life and holiness. "By one Spirit we are baptized into one body;" by the same Spirit "we have access to the Father," and through Him Christ reigns and will reign till every foe, inward and external, be forever subdued.

49. Why there should be, as we know there is, a close

The gift of the Spirit required the departure of Christ.

connection between the departure of Christ and the communication of the Spirit, it is not perhaps possible to discover; but the fact is clearly revealed, and there are circumstances in our Saviour's work which may in part explain it.

Some reasons.

50. Christ is our *Priest*, ever living to make intercession for us; but His advocacy could scarcely begin till His sacrifice was finished, nor His sacrifice take effect till it had been publicly and solemnly presented before God.

Christ is our *Teacher and Model*, and His purpose is to conform His Church to Himself. He is therefore presented in Scripture as in everything preparing the way for the progress of His church. It is His appropriate function as our forerunner, Himself to touch the goal; nor till then is He in a position to appeal to His example, and to bequeath His Spirit, and to say to us, "Follow me." Or, changing the figure, it is the work of the Spirit to complete in each Christian the image of his Lord, by effecting in him a death unto sin and a resurrection to holiness, and an ascension of his affections, and finally, of his soul to God; but the Divine Workman could not begin the copy till the original was finished: before He could stamp the image the die must be complete.

Christ is our *King;* His Spirit is the fruit of victory and the gift of conquest; but the influence of the Spirit cannot be bestowed till the triumph is consummated and attested by the appearance of the living Sacrifice, Priest and Victor, in the presence of the Father. The enlargement, therefore, and the establishment of the kingdom, is postponed till the acknowledged defeat of evil through the spirit of righteousness incarnate in Christ.

A double empire in heaven and on earth.

Here we gain, therefore, a view of a double empire, requiring a double agency. Christ has a sovereignty in heaven and another on earth: *there* He intercedes with the Father on the throne in

His glory, so also does His Spirit in the unspoken utterances of the hearts of His disciples. *There* he makes mention of His sacrifice, pleading on behalf of the guilty His obedience unto death: so does His Spirit in convincing the sinner, "making mention of His righteousness and of His only." (Ps. lxxi. 16.) To heaven He gives His bodily presence, itself a commemoration and a perpetual advocacy, and on earth He works with a power and a vitality which His bodily presence never diffused. We gain, therefore, by this arrangement, an agency which is the perfect image of His own, better adapted to our condition of probation, and more mighty in promoting our holiness; "for Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." (Heb. ix. 24.) "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God; as it is written, I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Now if any man defile the temple of God, him will God destroy." (1 Cor. iii.)

The Acts of the Apostles the earliest history of this ministration.

52. And this is the ministration which begins with the Acts of the Apostles, or, as they have been called, the Acts of the Holy Ghost. The incarnation and ministry of our Lord was the manifestation of the Father and of the Son; our age is the manifestation of the Spirit.

The truth gradually revealed.

53. In Matthew and Mark we have nothing of this truth; in Luke a little, but most in John. The Lord thus reveals one secret after another, bringing forth each in its season, and leading the devout inquirer to say, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God."*

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* "As the Son was working in the world long before His incarnation, so did the Holy Ghost also act upon mankind long before His effusion; but as it was at the incarnation of the Son that the fullness of His life first manifested itself, so it was not until the effusion which took place

Caution.

Christ King of providence and nature.

54. But though this spiritual reign is, in its final universality and blessedness, the chief part of His kingdom, it is not all. The affairs of the whole earth, and, as we may gather from some passages of Scripture, of the universe of God, are under His management. It is He who "determines concerning a nation to establish, and concerning a people to establish or to destroy," to enlarge or to diminish. "He is King of kings, and Lord of lords." All are amenable to His authority, and controlled by His power. He girds them and guides them, though they know Him not. When they move in the direction of His purpose, they are invincible, and when they oppose it, they are overthrown.

There is thus a kingdom within a kingdom—the kingdom of His grace within the kingdom of His providence: and the one is subservient to the other. He is Head over all things unto the church. An almighty Spirit, and boundless resources are at His disposal. Therefore "this King shall reign and prosper." "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. Yea, all kings shall fall down before Him: all nations shall serve Him. His name shall endure for ever: His name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in Him: all nations shall call Him blessed."

SECT 4.—THE SECOND COMING OF OUR LORD.

Christians ever look to the past and the future.

55. In every age the Church of Christ has sought consolation in the past and in the future. In the one she contemplates the origin of her mercies; in the other, the completion of them; and in both, the unaltered author and channel, "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." It can there-

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on the day of Pentecost that the Spirit poured forth all His power."—*Olshausen.*

fore excite no surprise to find in Scripture, that the grace given to us at the first advent, and the grace to be revealed in us at the second, are topics of constant precept and encouragement: (1 Cor. i. 4–7:) or that Christians are described as "waiting for the Son from heaven;" and as "looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of the great God our Saviour." Christ's first coming and His second are the grand objects of their faith and hope. (2 Pet. iii. 12.)

The coming of Christ a theme of deep interest.

56. But though the coming of Christ is thus a theme of deepest interest, there is much in the communications of Scripture in relation to it that is incomprehensible. The union of Christ with His Church is most intimate; and yet is there between them a mysterious separation. How long that separation is to continue is a question not answered in the Bible. It has already lasted for ages, nor can we tell when it will close. "The times and the seasons which the Father has put in His own power," He allows us to examine and discuss, but we cannot clearly define them; they are not revealed.

Much that is incomprehensible in relation to it.

57. That this separation will one day cease is undoubted. The union between Christ and His church must be made apparent. Nature and grace alike proclaim the coming of a *glorified* Messiah as essential to complete their course. Nature through all her regions cries aloud for Him who is to restore her unwilling frailty, (Rom. viii.,) and to make all things new; and if creation groan and travail together in pain for the manifestation of the sons of God, what must be the desire of the sons of God themselves, what their ardor, to find themselves perfect in Him; to behold their labors recognized, their faith vindicated, and truth triumphant. This desire and hope He will fulfill. The promise of final reunion

The fact of His coming certain.

with His people is connected by our Lord himself with the declaration of His Messiahship; for in the same sentence in which He avows Himself to be the Son of God, He foretells that "hereafter men shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with power and great glory." (Matt. xxiv. 30.) His apostle repeats the truth, and assures us that the "Lord shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God;" (1 Thes. iv. 16;) and that, when He comes, His people will be gathered together unto Him. (2 Thes. ii. 1.) And so shall they "ever be with the Lord."

58. But while the fact of His coming is certain, the time is concealed; concealed, however, in such a way as deserves careful inquiry. Wrapt up in this concealment are most instructive lessons.

The time concealed: so concealed as to excite expectation.

59. Very often, for example, the coming of our Lord is spoken of as impending, and at hand. In the twenty-fourth of Matthew the words of Christ read as if He meant to imply that, immediately after the overthrow of Jerusalem, the standard of His glory should appear in the heavens: the first event indicating to the disciples that their redemption drew nigh. In the first Epistle to the Thessalonians again, St. Paul seems to speak of himself and of his fellow-disciples, as those who "are alive and remain to the coming of Christ" in glory; and declares elsewhere that He who is coming (ὁ ἐρχόμενος) will come, and will not tarry. The apostle James is equally explicit: "Be patient; stablish your hearts; for the coming of the Lord *draweth nigh*." "The end of all things," says Peter, "is *at hand;* be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer;" and our Lord Himself appearing in the book of Revelation, closes His warnings with the repeated assertion, "Behold I come *quickly*." (Heb. x. 37; James v. 8; 1 Pet. iv. 7.)

Now spoken of as "at hand."

On the other hand, passages in the same inspired writers

Now "as remote." as strongly point to a remote period as the time of His coming; while others teach plainly that all definite information in relation to it is purposely withheld. In the chapter of Matthew, for example, just quoted, our Lord warns His disciples that the Gospel is first to be preached for a witness unto all nations, before the end come; and in the following chapter He compares Himself to a master of servants who cometh "after a long time," and "reckoneth with them." (v. 14; 25–29.) The same Paul, who, in the first Epistle to the Thessalonians, addressed the church as if those who were then alive were to behold Christ, warns them in his second Epistle, that his words were not meant to justify any such conviction, inasmuch as that day was to be preceded by a great apostasy, and of course by a still greater diffusion of truth. The apostle who speaks of His coming as "drawing nigh," exhorts Christians to endurance from the example of the long patience of the husbandman waiting for the fruits of the earth. (James v. 7.) And Peter, who, in his first Epistle speaks of the end of all things as at hand, and bids Christians hope for the grace that is to be brought unto them at the revelation of Jesus Christ, in his second Epistle meets objections to the tardy approach of the Judge; not by denying the fact, but by reminding his readers, that the march of Providence is not to be measured by earthly conceptions, and that with God a thousand years are as one day, and one day as a thousand years. (2 Pet. iii. 8.) So also in Revelation the promise of the speedy advent of Christ is preceded by a description of antecedent events which seem to fill up long ages of time.

61. Yet more decisive as proof of a purpose to conceal the time, are the passages which tell us plainly that all definite information on this subject is withheld. "Of that day and hour," says our Lord, "knoweth no man; no, not the angels which are

Now as though all definite information were withheld.

in heaven; neither the Son, but the Father." "The Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not." The master of the house may come "at even, or at midnight, or at cock-crowing, or in the morning;" but whenever he comes it "shall be as a thief; as the flood of Noah, and as a snare to all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth." (Mark xiii. 35.) "And ye yourselves know perfectly," says the apostle, "that that day so cometh as a thief in the night." (1 Thess. v. 2; 2 Pet. iii. 10.)

Hence the doubts of some Christians and the scoffs of infidelity.

62. The apparent contradiction of these passages—a contradiction only apparent—has often excited uneasiness and even suspicion. Infidels and professed Christians have taken occasion from them either to doubt the coming of our Lord itself, or to examine, with curious unsettled feeling, the question of the time. The doubts and suspicion of both these parties are expressly foretold. Our Lord intimates that before He appears, even His servants may begin to say in their hearts, "My Lord delayeth His coming." (Luke xii. 45.) And Peter says plainly that "in the last days scoffers shall come walking after their own lust; and saying, where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." (2 Pet iii. 3.) Nothing, therefore, is unforeseen; and even the unbelief of man contributes evidence in support of the Divine origin of the Gospel.

Both foretold.

Reasons for this apparent contradiction.

63. How, then, are we to account for the peculiar phraseology of the Scriptures on this question, the mingled light and obscurity, the seeming opposition of announcements? In reply, we remark that there are facts which relieve the difficulty; and, perhaps, remove it.

64. First: it deserves to be noticed that "the coming of Christ" is a phrase used in Scripture in different senses.

(1.) His appearance in the flesh is so called, both at His birth and on His entrance upon His public ministry. In this sense He is come (John xvi. 28; 1 John iv. 2, 3; 2 John 7; Matt. xviii. 11; xx. 28; Eph. ii. 17;) and in this sense for thirty years of His life He was to come. (Matt. iii. 11; Mark i. 7; Luke iii. 16; John i. 15–30; Matt. xi. 19.)

Meaning of the phrase—"the coming of the Lord."

(2.) Any great interposition either of His Providence or of His Spirit is so called: "Repent," says He, in addressing an early church, "or I will COME, and take thy candlestick out of its place." (Rev. ii. 5.)

He himself applies it to the outpouring of His Spirit and the consequent beginning of His reign. "Verily I say unto you, there are some standing here that shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom." "Ye shall not have gone through the cities of Judah till ye see the Son of Man coming in power." (John xiv. 18—28; Matt. xvi. 28; Mark ix. 1.)

His coming to destroy Jerusalem, to end the previous dispensation, to manifest the justice and the faithfulness of God, is emphatically so called; and His predictions of this coming were fulfilled within forty years of our Lord's death. (Matt. xxiv. 27–30; see ver. 34; Luke xxi. 27, &c.)

(3.) It is applied to His visible appearance for judgment, (Matt. xvi. 27; 1 Thess. v.,) and, as some Christians hold, for the complete establishment of His kingdom. Whether this last be a visible appearance is, so far as the present question is concerned, unimportant. The reign of righteousness is foretold, and is even begun. In that glorious issue all believe. Some, however, hold that righteousness will reign in the person of our Lord; while others think that His reign is spiritual only: having commenced at Pentecost, and being completed in the universal diffusion of His truth. That His coming to judgment is personal, nearly all agree. He is to appear in the clouds of heaven, and every eye is to see Him. (Acts i. 11.)

The use to be made of these facts is obvious. It is clear that we must set aside, as free from difficulty, all the passages that speak of our Lord's first coming, of the destruction of Jerusalem, or of any unexpected visitation in the early church. The announcements they contain of a speedy return have all been fulfilled.

Of other passages, and the difficulties they involve, we have other solutions.

Secondly: the coming of Christ in His kingdom and for judgment is not a single act, but many combined. He *came* to reign at Pentecost; He *comes* as each Christian repents and believes His Gospel; in all the glory of His reign He is still to come. He *came* in judgment at the destruction of Jerusalem: He *comes* in judgment at the death of the sinner: for final judgment He is still to come. To each believer redemption is drawing nigh. Every sinner is already hastening to the coming of the day of God. And within a few brief years we all shall have passed to our account with shame or with honor. It may be affirmed, therefore, as a fact, that Christ comes to redeem or to judge at death, and that each instance of His coming is a kind of type of His final appearance—is to the man, what *that* will be to the race. The final coming will in truth but confirm and perpetuate what is *done*, when we die. As a principle of interpretation, therefore, the amplest announcements of complete salvation for the church, and of awful vengeance for those who reject the Gospel, have repeated fulfillments. For *each* of us, "the end of all things is at hand." Christ is coming, and is even now "at the door."*

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* See this truth illustrated in the fulfillment of Christ's promise that He would come to His disciples, as given in John xiv. 3. The fulfillment began with His resurrection, v. 18; was carried on in their spiritual life,

65. Thirdly: these expressions may be justified on another ground. The language of Scripture must always be interpreted with reference to the scheme of things of which it treats. What is near on one scale is distant on another.

Things near or distant according to the scale employed.

The coming of our Lord may be remote when measured on the scale of human life; but, measured on the scale suggested by the interval between the first promise and its fulfillment, or by the eternity which His coming is to introduce, it may seem even at hand. We are now occupying a place between the two advents; the whole interval fills the sphere of our vision, and seems therefore vast and boundless. Let us wait, however, till we look back upon it the day after the last judgment, when it will be seen as the commencement of an endless progress, and it will have lessened to a point. Then the scenes of Calvary and the glory that has followed them will appear in retrospect as they did appear to the prophet. *There* He is seen "taken from prison and from judgment;" "despised and rejected of men." *Here* He sees "the travail of His soul and is satisfied." (Is. liii. 8, 3, 11.) Between the two events thousands of years may have intervened; but they are thought of no more.

So the whole of the language of Scripture.

And this form of announcement, it may be added, has been God's plan from the first. The primæval promise sounded as if it was to be fulfilled in the first age after the fall; but four thousand years passed away before the Seed of the woman was born, and the power of the old serpent was subdued. The temporal promise to Abraham, that his seed should inherit the land in which he was himself a stranger, seemed at first to require an early accomplishment; but at the end of two hundred years his seed did not number seventy souls; and

v. 23; advanced when each Christian died, Phil. i. 23; and is completed at His coming in glory. 1 Thes. iv. 17.

it was not till David's time that the greater part of that prediction was realized. The last prophet, Malachi, spoke as if the first advent was to be witnessed by the men of that age: "The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple," (Mal. iii. 1,) and yet ten generations died before the time came; and the temple even of which he spoke needed almost to be rebuilt, before it could be filled with the glory of its great Guest. The truth seems to be, that the movements of the providence of God may be pronounced near or remote, large or small, as we measure them by God's standard or by our own. Now He speaks as if the coming of His Son were at hand, as if a few more years were to bring in the new heaven and the new earth; and again, as if His days were thousands of years; and both descriptions are true. Here, it is God that speaks *as God*, and there He speaks as *man*, condescending to our weakness, and addressing us in tones and forms familiar to ourselves.

But, fourthly, these facts have a deeper significancy. This apparent contradiction (which is really none,) this clear obscurity is intended; it is salutary; it forms an important part of our discipline. God means us to examine and conjecture; and, doubtless, the investigations of good men into the meaning of the prophetic Scriptures, conducted in an humble practical spirit, are acceptable to Him. To cherish expectation, and to encourage inquiry, He has permitted gleams of light to cross our path. But it is at least as clear that, while He means us to inquire, He does not mean us to define; and, therefore, our light consists only of gleams. He that is coming will come. His coming is as certain as His existence; for He is equally the existing and the coming One (ὁ ὢν and ὁ ἐρχόμενος;) but all certainty concerning the time of His coming is withheld.

All intended to produce a patient waiting for Christ.

And withheld so as to excite our watchfulness and hope.

Had the *time* of His appearance been foretold, the certainty would have destroyed our *hope*, and His coming would have been regarded with comparative unconcern by all except the single generation that was to witness it. The anxious solicitude now cherished amongst us would have been chilled into indifference; the movements of the providence and the grace of God, which are now studied so thoughtfully, would have been watched with little interest; and it may be safely affirmed that the character of the piety of the church would have been seriously changed. We should have been saved by hope—by the patient waiting for God—no more.

With consummate skill, therefore, has the whole language of revelation been constructed, in real harmony, though in apparent contradiction, so as to produce this one result. When and how Christ is to appear we know not; but we are waiting for Him. Our feeling is watchfulness and hope, certainty and doubt, inquiry and awe. It is Christ's purpose thus "to live in our faith, remote yet near, pledged to no moment, possible at any; worshiped, not with the consternation of a near, or the indifference of a remote certainty; but with the watchful vigilance that awaits a contingency that is ever at hand."* These feelings He who knows us best knows to be best for us; and therefore He preserves the salutary suspense which ensures and deepens them.

This arrangement liable to abuse.

66. But every provision of Divine wisdom is liable to abuse. God is a spirit, and His spirituality is His glory; but because He is a spirit, and therefore unseen, men have denied His existence. The time of Christ's coming is not told us; and therefore men are tempted to deny the judgment; or, at least, the uncertainty which was meant for holy watchfulness is abused to godless security.

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* Prof. Butler's Sermons. Dublin, 1819.

The delay is owing to His love.

Alas for us! The forbearance of God leadeth to repentance; but men know it not: "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, but is long-suffering to usward; not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (2 Pet. iii. 9.) He would rather be known in love than in terror. Christ, the sacrifice, continues to be revealed, that we may not one day be dragged into the presence of Christ, the judge. Now He is mighty to save; then he will be mighty to destroy. He defers the hour of His coming that He may multiply the number of His redeemed. Despise not this grace: seek not to frustrate this purpose. If His first advent is loved, we shall welcome and wait for His second; but if His first advent is despised, his second will be contemplated with dismay. If our hearts are not prepared to receive this glorious Redeemer; if we have no taste for a kingdom of purity, and meekness, and love, no desire for the bringing in of "an everlasting righteousness," His coming will not therefore be annulled: but it will be to us a coming in wrath. Our feeling will correspond with fearful accuracy to the description of the prophet: "Then shall the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the mighty men cry, saying to the mountains, and to the rocks, Fall upon us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb." "The wrath of the Lamb!" The wrath of exhausted patience; the wrath of rejected mediation, and of despised love: "THE WRATH OF THE LAMB!"

And now our work is done. Rapidly and imperfectly have we sketched THAT LIFE which is the source of all life, and to which we owe our all. We have traced Him in infancy and in manhood; in secret and among the crowds; at work and in prayer. We have listened to His teaching. We have watched His sacrifice. We have heard the announcement of His kingdom. As man He has won our love. As God He has claimed our reverence. He has appeared as Creator; as Redeemer; as Judge. Religion begins in submission to His righteousness, and it is completed in likeness to His character. Conformity to His death and the truths it teaches is renewal and pardon; conformity to His life is holiness and bliss. "Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling; kiss the Son lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way when his wrath is kindled but a little. BLESSED ARE ALL THEY THAT PUT THEIR TRUST IN HIM."

APPENDIX.

NOTE I. (Page 93.)

ALTHOUGH the idea of the Messianic Kingdom of God may be truly said to pervade the Old Testament prophecies, the *phraseology* of the New Testament seems clearly derived from the language of Daniel, in expounding the symbolic imagery of Nebuchadnezzar's first grand prophetic dream. "In the days of these kings shall the *God of Heaven* set up a *kingdom* which shall never be destroyed," &c. In the seventh chapter, this kingdom is disclosed as strictly *Messianic* (vs. 13, 14; comp. ix. 25, 26,) and *holy*, (v. 27;) being given to the Messiah, and through Him to "the people of the saints of the Most High."

Hence the language of John the Baptist, of Christ, and His Apostles; "The *time* is fulfilled; the kingdom of God is *at hand; repent* ye, and believe the Gospel"—words which do not merely designate the prophetic *time*, but more strongly still the spiritual and holy *nature* of the approaching kingdom. This last point is strikingly demonstrated by our Lord himself at the beginning of his ministry, in his conversation with Nicodemus; "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be *born again* he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John iii.) In precise accordance with this view, Paul speaks of Christians as "delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son." (Col. i. 13.) This kingdom then properly includes only the regenerate, the holy—those who receive Christ, and submit to His authority as their Supreme Head. Of such only, as far as man could judge, were the primitive churches organized; and the fearful deaths of Judas, Ananias and Sapphira, were evidently designed as warnings against the intrusion of others into the visible fold of Christ. (Acts i. 18; v. 11–14.)

Yet inasmuch as such intruders could not always be detected, and it was foreseen that their number would increase through relaxation of vigilance in future time, the phrases "kingdom of God, and of Heaven," appear to be used by Christ in some of the prophetic parables with greater latitude—as embracing all who *profess* submission to Christ, whether that profession is made in sincerity or not. (Matt. xiii.) J. N. B.

Note II. (Page 249 and 251.)

One fertile source of practical error has been the confounding of the Visible with the Invisible Church, and reasoning from this assumed identity, that they differ from each other only as a part differs from the whole.

The essential difference between the two, appears in the following extract from *Curtis on Communion*:

"So far from it being a manifest truth, that it is only a difference of numbers that constitutes the distinction between a particular Visible Church and the Universal Church, which is invisible; there are at least *two* obvious points of distinction as to qualification *necessarily* arising from the fact, that the one is a visible, and the other an invisible body. 1. He who possesses true piety without any profession, becomes at once a member of the invisible Church, while he only, who makes some credible and appropriate profession, (without here determining what it is) is eligible to visible Church fellowship. 2. *A credible profession of faith in Christ*, in some particular way or ways, is all that can be required for admission to the one, while no conceivable profession without the reality admits to the other." J. N. B.

THE END.

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